2

Parents Groans

OVER THEIR

Wicked Children.

SEVERAL

SERMONS

On *PROV.* XVII. 25.

Publiſhed for the Benefit of all, but eſpecially of good Parents and their Children.

By *EDWARD LAWRENCE*, M. A. ſometimes Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Baſchurch*, in the County of *Salop*.

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1 Sam. 2. 25.—*Notwithſtanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their Father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them.*

LONDON:

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurſt*, at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapſide*, near *Mercers-Chappel*: and *Joſeph Collier* at the *Bible*, under the Gate, on *London-Bridge*. 1681.

To my beloved Children, *Deborah, Samuel, Edward, John, Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary, Benjamin, Nathanael*; and to all the Children of Chriſtian Parents.

My dear Children!

I *Am ſenſible of my unworthineſs, and unfitneſs to be ſeen in Print; it is now above Twenty years ſince, by the power and goodneſs of God, I was unexpectedly reſcued from the jaws of death, which was the reaſon I then publiſhed that little book, called,* Chriſts Power over bodily Diſeaſes: *and I had never been the Author of a book of this Title, had not two of you, but eſpecially one made me the Father of fools.*

I ſhall here ſay no more particularly to you two, but that ſound repentance, and the fruits thereof, in a ſetled reformation of life, will yet be your glory, and my joy; but if ye hate to be reform'd, (which God forbid) I ſhall mourn till I dye for the loſs of Children, but ye will be tormented for ever for the loſs of God.

Children! *I have not of the things of this world to leave you. I do acknowledge the mu-*

To my beloved Children, *Deborah, Samuel, Edward, John, Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary, Benjamin, Nathanael*; and to all the Children of Christian Parents.

My dear Children!

I *Am sensible of my unworthiness, and unfitness to be seen in Print; it is now above Twenty years since, by the power and goodness of God, I was unexpectedly rescued from the jaws of death, which was the reason I then published that little book, called,* Christs Power over bodily Diseases: *and I had never been the Author of a book of this Title, had not two of you, but especially one made me the Father of fools.*

I shall here say no more particularly to you two, but that sound repentance, and the fruits thereof, in a setled reformation of life, will yet be your glory, and my joy; but if ye hate to be reform'd, (which God forbid) I shall mourn till I dye for the loss of Children, but ye will be tormented for ever for the loss of God.

Children! *I have not of the things of this world to leave you. I do acknowledge the wis-*

dom of God in not judging me fit to be intruſted with theſe things; but it's enough for us if we can call God our own, though we cannot call the riches of the world our own; ſome of you do with comfort remember how we have often worſhipped God together in ſinging with delight thoſe words, Pſal. 37. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked, *&c.*

I here leave you this Letter of the counſel and advice of your aged, and loving, and faithful Father, who ſees death looking him and you in the face, and beholds the Judg before the door: *this will ſpeak to you, when death hath ſilenc'd me; and it ſpeaks the ſame things which God, and Chriſt, and your own Conſciences ſpeak to you; and it ſpeaks to you (as it were) in the hearing of the world.*

1. *Put a true value on your own Beings, for ye cannot love God and Chriſt, if ye do not love your ſelves; ye are of that kind of creatures who are made much higher than all other viſible creatures, and but* a little lower than the Angels; *ye are capable to know, and chuſe, and love, and delight in God, and to ſpeak of him, and to entertain your ſelves continually with him; ye are of thoſe creatures in whoſe happineſs God glorifies all his perfections; he made this world for man; he commanded his only-begotten Son to ſacrifice himſelf for man, and ſent him*

to be born, and to live, and dye, and to riſe again, and to intercede in heaven for man; he hath reveal'd all the Truths of the Chriſtian Religion for the good of man; and therefore ye ſhould think it greater madneſs to ſell your precious ſouls and bodies to the Devil, and your luſts, for the ſhort and dirty pleaſures of ſin, than to ſell a purſe of gold, or a cabinet full of jewels for a bag of chaff or cherry-ſtones; and ſhould account it below you to give your ſelves to any but to God.

2. *Know that as your Beings are great, ſo your happineſs or miſery will be very great; Riches or poverty, ſickneſs or health, this preſent life, or the death that deprives you of it, are things too little to make you bleſſed or miſerable; all the curſes of God, or the bleſſings of the Goſpel will be upon you preſently; and ye can neither live like men, nor like Chriſtians, till ye know what it is to be ſav'd or damn'd, and what it is to loſe or enjoy God.*

3. *That ye may eſcape the wrath, and obtain the glory ſet before you, let it be your chief end and intereſt to know, and honour, and enjoy God; uſe the creatures as his witneſſes, to teſtifie and declare the being and glory of God to you; for God hath not only made and appointed them to* fill your hearts with food and gladneſs, *but alſo that in the uſe of them ye may* feel, *and* find, *and fill your ſouls with God; but*

especially behold the glory of God, as he is presented to you in the glass of the Scriptures, that he may have that name in your hearts, which he hath in his word.

Present him to your souls as God over all blessed for ever, *that ye may conclude that he who is so infinitely good, as to be his own happiness, is sufficient to make you happy: And that this God may be your eternal life and happiness, ye must know and behold* his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, *who is* the Image of the invisible God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; *and therefore behold his glory as the Father of such a Son, and as the Lord of such a servant, for Jesus Christ is the* Lords Christ, *Luk.* 2. 26. Christ is Gods, 1 *Cor.* 3. 23. *and executes his office of a Mediator in obedience to the will, and to the glory of God the Father, whose glory ye may behold in his calling him to such a high office, in his accomplishing him for the execution thereof, in prospering him, and making him successful in his whole work, in giving him such a blessed seed, in making him victorious over all his enemies, and in rewarding him for his great service and obedience; so that according to the intent of the Scriptures forenamed, ye must labour to get such a sight of the glory of God shining upon you in the face of Jesus Christ, as will make an impression of his image in your souls.*

And

And therefore loathe and abhor ſin, which is againſt the glory of God, and which is the only evil that can make you loſe ſuch a glorious God.

And for this reaſon be convinc'd of the vanity of this world, which is but a poor thing when the glory of God ſhines on your ſouls; for ye will be moſt bleſſed in him when this world ſhall be diſſolv'd and paſs'd away.

And let this make Jeſus Chriſt glorious and acceptable to you, whoſe office and work it is to redeem you from all ſin and miſery, and to make you bleſſed for ever in the likeneſs and enjoyment of this glorious God.

And let this alſo cauſe you to endeavour to fill all perſons with the great Name of God and Chriſt, that ye may gain them all the hearts, and love, and ſervice ye can; and therefore in all company let God and Chriſt have your good word.

4. *Know that to love and delight in God is the beſt imployment for the days of your youth; God is much concern'd for young perſons; the Proverbs of* Solomon *are written,* to give to the young man knowledge and diſcretion, *Prov.* 1. 4. *and one great uſe of the word of God is to teach* young men to cleanſe their way, *Pſal.* 119. 9. Young men, and maidens, and children, *are call'd upon* to praiſe the Name of the Lord, *Pſal.* 148. 12, 13. *We find many mourning with holy* Auguſtine, *that*

they loved God ſo late, but none complaining that they loved him too ſoon; as young as you are, in heaven and hell, it's better be a young child of God, than a young child of the Devil: young Saints are the glory of God, the fulneſs and accompliſhment of Chriſt, the joy of Angels, the ſecurity and ſupport of Religion, the crown of their Parents, and the bleſſing of their Generation.

5. *Fill your time with the fruits of the Spirit; ſee that your hearts be fill'd with grace, and then your days will be fill'd with fruit; be always receiving Chriſt, and reſigning your ſelves to him; feel your hearts continually laying hold on eternal life, and live as if ye were always running to heaven; ſpend every day, ſo that ye may lye down in peace at night, that the Lords-day may be pleaſant, death gainful, and eternity glorious.*

6. *Improve Gods Ordinances of worſhip; feel your vow of Baptiſm always freſh and ſtrong upon you; feel the difference betwixt the Lords-day and other days; ſee that the word Preached be mixt with faith, ingrafted in your hearts; that it kill your ſins, and reform your lives; pray continually, and in that duty ſee that ye be with the ſpirits of children with your Father in Heaven; let all your affairs paſs through praying-hearts; and reckon all your own which ye ſincerely pray for; Sing*

Pſalms,

Pſalms, as thoſe that make God your ſong and joy; and as if ye were ſenſible that ye are in the gates of heaven, ready to enter therein, to joyn with that world of bleſſed Angels and Saints in admiring and praiſing God. When ye come to the Lords-Supper, ſee all that is preſented to you, receive all that is offered, and do all that is commanded you.

7. *Be faithful to the Truth, and then ye need not be afraid of your ſelves, or of any other: this is your greateſt ſafety, and ye may then feel the ground firm under you, and may ſay with* David, *Pſal.* 26. 12. My foot ſtandeth in an even place; *and if ye are called to ſuffer, chuſe it rather than ſin; and ſeeing men cannot kill your ſouls, let not the fear of them make you deſtroy them your ſelves.*

8. *Decline evil company; do not go with them to Hell, who will not go with you to Heaven; but if ye are called into ſuch company, feel your ſelves with God, whilſt ye are with them, and carry it as thoſe that are ſenſible that there is a God in the place; exerciſe thoſe graces which are contrary to, and do condemn their ſins; be humble with the proud, meek with the angry, loving with the malicious, that they may be reproved by your graces, and that ye may not be defiled by their ſins.*

9. *Labour to be a bleſſing to all perſons; let men ſee that in you, for which they may have cauſe*

cauſe to love and praiſe God; bear all wrongs, but do none; do what in you lyes to make all perſons holy and joyful, but make none ſinful, angry, or ſad; forgive all, but let none have need to forgive you; exerciſe their love, but do not by your ſins exerciſe their patience; give all cauſe to bleſs God for you, but give not cauſe to any to wiſh they had never known you.

10. *Dread debts; do not unneceſſarily bring your ſelves under the bondage of debtors; look upon it as more juſt and honourable to beg, than to borrow, if ye are not likely to pay, except in that caſe ye plainly acquaint the lender with your condition, that he may know what adventure he makes; and when ye are able, pay ſeaſonably, fully, and thankfully: I would have none to lend to any children of mine, without firſt adviſing with me, except they be in a hopeful way of trade: and my advice to ſuch of you is, that you be afraid of being too much truſted; for it's often ſeen, that they who go to the length of their credit, are injurious to others, and prove bankrupts themſelves.*

11. *Abhor Lying: This is a ſin which is an abomination to the Lord, whom ye ſhould always pleaſe; it's conttary to the Divine Nature, which is in every one that is born of God,* Epheſ. 4. 24. *It's an abuſe of your tongues which*

which ſhould be your glory; for the uſe of your tongues is to expreſs your minds; but in a lye your minds and thoughts do contradict your words; it's a wrong to others whom ye would have believe you, when ye do not believe your ſelves; it makes you unfit for humane ſociety; for who will converſe with thoſe whom they cannot believe; ye hereby rot your names, for a lyar is one of the worſt characters of the devil of hell; ye deſtroy your bodies and ſouls for ever, for all lyars ſhall have their part in the lake of fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death.

12. *Do not dare to ſteal; take nothing from any perſon, but what ye can ſay ye received it from the hand of God, and can praiſe him for it; and can comfortably beg his bleſſing upon it; kill thoſe luſts which ye would feed with the fruit of other mens labours; conſider, that when ye are tempted to this ſin of theft, ye are tempted to bring a curſe on your eſtates and perſons, to thruſt a dagger into your Fathers heart, and to haſten your ſelves to an untimely and ſhameful death, and a tormenting eternity.*

13. *Deride and jeer no perſons; let your jeſts be harmleſs, and make not your ſelves the fools of your company; but whilſt ye are cheerful as men and women, loſe not the ſavour of Chriſtians.*

14. *Haunt*

14. *Haunt not Taverns or Ale-houſes, &c. Go not into ſuch places, but when God calls you; ſtay no longer than he will ſtay with you; and do nothing there, but what ye ſhall have cauſe to bleſs God for when ye come away.*

15. *Be thankful to them who have ſhew'd mercy and kindneſs to me and you; pray for them; inquire how it is with their poſterity; and as ye are capable, do them good: remember* Prov. 27. 10. Thy own friend, and thy fathers friend forſake not.

16. *Forgive all that have done me wrong, and pray to God not to viſit it on them, or their poſterity; ye know I have had hard meaſure from ſome, and I know that* I have ſtood before God to ſpeak good for them, and to turn away his wrath from them.

17. *As for you that are or may be hereafter ſet up for your ſelves in a way of trade: my counſel to you is this: See that your perſons be upright with God, that ye may have a Scripture-right to the promiſes of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, which is to be prefer'd before the beſt eſtate in the world. Pray to God for his bleſſing, and ſee every cuſtomer as ſent from him, and love them as your ſelves; let all that deal with you have cauſe to ſay, that they deal with the members of Jeſus Chriſt.*

18. *And*

18. *And for you that are or may be Apprentices, my counſel and command to you is this: Let thoſe Scriptures dwell in your hearts which teach you your duty, and encourage you therein, as* Epheſ. 5. 5, 6, 7, 8. Col. 3. 22, 23, 24, 25. Tit. 2. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 2. 18, 19, 20, 21. *Commit them to memory, and bleſs God that he condeſcends to be a teacher of ſervants; be content with your preſent condition, which may be the eaſieſt time of your whole age; be not apt to find fault, for that will make you uneaſie to your ſelves, and to the family; let all your words, and looks, and actions, be ſuch as do witneſs that ye do in your hearts honour your Maſters and Miſtreſſes, and Chriſt in them; bear correction patiently, though ye be wrong'd; the ſufferings of Chriſt are ſet before you as your patern herein. Pray daily for your Maſters, and their families, for ye ought to improve all your intereſt in God for their good; pray to God to fit you for your calling, that he who teacheth the husbandman to plow and ſow,* Iſa. 28. 26. *may teach you herein.*

To conclude, Love one another according to all the Obligiations that are upon you, but never put it in the power of any one to undo the other.

Kill all luſtings after the honours, or riches, or pleaſures of the world: Remember I have told

told you, that as love fulfils all the Law of God, ſo luſt fulfils the law of the Devil. I will ſay no more; chuſe him for your Father that cannot dye: And as Mr. Bolton *ſaid to his children, ſo ſay I to you, Do not dare to meet me at the day of judgment in an unregenerate ſtate.*

June 6. 1681. Your loving and

faithful Father,

EDWARD LAWRENCE.

To

To all Christian Parents.

IT is not only for the sake of my self and children, but also for the sake of you and yours that I have published this little book; but especially out of respect to the glory of God, that we may leave a seed to bless him in this world, when we are glorifying him in the better world; it will cost you but a little money to buy it, and but a little time for you and your children to read it; if those of you who are able, do give to every one of your children one of these books, and do likewise bestow some of them upon the children of the poor, this will be no advantage to me; and when ye come to give your account, will be no loss to you: I am a lover of children, and have often lifted up my heart in prayer to God for them, where I have seen them. I wish this may be a blessing to you and them; pray that we may leave that Religion which came origi-

originally from the Father of Jesus Christ, and is reveal'd to us in the Scriptures, to our posterity, and that they may have hearts to live according to the rules and principles of it, more than we have done. Farewell.

June 6. 1681. Your Servant

for Jesus sake,

EDW. LAWRENCE.

ERRATA.

Page 35. line 19. instead of *cinque*, read *sink*.
Page 82. line 21. read *afflictions*.

Parents Groans over their wicked Children.

Prov. XVII. 25.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

IT is one great argument of the vanity of this world, that we may be spoil'd of all that is dear to us under the Sun by the sins of other men.

A common and sad instance of this is, That the Comforts of godly Parents here are very much at the will and pleasure of their own Children: For had a

good man all other delights that the creatures can yield, and *did waſh his ſteps in butter, and dip his foot in oyl:* Nay ſuppoſe he had all the pleaſures of Godlineſs that are ordinarily attained in this life, yet he will be a man of ſorrow, if a wicked Child make him the *Father of a fool.*

— This doleful caſe is preſented to us in this Text, which I have choſen for the ſubject of this diſcourſe, that I may duly affect my own and others hearts with this great calamity.

In the Text two things are clearly ſet before us.

1. A caſe taken for granted; and that is, That godly Parents have often fooliſh Children.

2. The miſery of that caſe is expreſſed; that is, *That ſuch Children are a grief to their Fathers, and bitterneſs to the Mothers that bare them.*

The Explication of the Text.

A fooliſh ſon, that is, a wicked and ungodly ſon, or daughter; for it's uſual in this book of the *Proverbs*, that both ſexes are intended, when but one

is

is expreſſed: Wicked Children think themſelves wiſe, wiſer than their Parents, or Maſters, or Miniſters; *for vain man would be wiſe, though he be like a wild Aſſes colt*, Job 11. 12. But all the Devils children are fools; for he that will obey and imitate the Devil, who is a murderer of all his own children, and will not obey and imitate Chriſt who is the Redeemer and Saviour of all his Children, I may ſay of him in the words of a wiſe Woman, *A fool is his name, and folly is with him.*

Is a grief to his Father. By Father and Mother in the Text, I underſtand a godly Father and Mother, who are moſt affected with this caſe. *Is a grief:* ſome render the word *anger*, or *indignation*, and both grief and anger are intended; for a fooliſh ſon maketh his good Father both angry and ſad.

And bitterneſs to her that bare him; that is, to his good Mother, called *her that bare him*, to aggravate the Mothers miſery, and the Childs ſin: It cannot but torment the good Mother to think that ſhe did with ſo much ſickneſs, and

pain, and ſorrow bear and bring forth one that proves a child of the Devil, and is like to be a firebrand of Hell; and it's a great aggravation of the childs ſins, to imbitter the life of her that was a means of life to him; and to haſten that womb to the worms, which with ſuch pangs and throws brought him into the world.

The Text will be further opened in the following diſcourſe, which I ſhall reduce to theſe three Heads.

Firſt, That it is ordinary for godly Parents to have wicked and ungodly Children.

Secondly, That this is a very great calamity to theſe godly Parents.

Thirdly, Uſe.

1. It is ordinary for godly Parents to have wicked and ungodly Children: this is implied in the Text: And I may ſay of this what *Solomon* ſpeaks of another caſe, *Eccleſ.* 6. 1. *It is an evil which I have ſeen under the Sun, and it is common among men.*

In the handling of this, I ſhall

1. Give ſome Characters of godly Parents. 2. Some

2. Some Characters of ungodly Children.

3. I shall give you several instances for the confirmation of it.

1. I shall only give you two main Characters of godly Parents.

First, They are conscienciously careful for their preservation.

Secondly, For the Eternal happiness and salvation of their Children.

1. They are conscienciously careful for the preservation of the natural lives of their Children, as trees support and feed the branches that grow out of themselves: And as it's natural to the brutes to defend and keep their own young, so nature it self teacheth and inclineth Parents to defend, and preserve, and provide for the fruit of their own bodies: and for this end to supply them with food, raiment, and physick, and to fit them for callings, and seasonably to provide for them meet yokefellows, and every way to take care, that they neither perish or be made miserable: but godly Parents, in whom natural affections are sanctified

and improved by Grace, do all these out of a principle of Godliness, as persons who have to do with God herein: they do it in a sense of their dependance on God, and pray for daily bread to feed their Children, and are thankful when they feel it come warm from their Father in Heaven; they do it in obedience and faithfulness to God; and with a design, that their Children may live to be born of God, and to be a blessing to this world, and be blessed in the other world: As for those unnatural monsters, who feed their lusts with that which should maintain their Children; they are so far from being Godly Parents, that they are worse than Infidels, in not providing for their Families; and are like the Devil, who (as I said, is a Murderer of his own Children.

2. They are conscienciously careful for the Eternal happiness and salvation of their Children; for their natural affections being now sanctified, do work in them for the spiritual good and happiness of their Children. *Prov.* 4. 3, 4, 5.

I was my fathers ſon, tender and only beloved in the ſight of my mother. Solomon was his fathers and mothers darling, their love did run out exceedingly upon this ſon; and he tells us which way their love and kindneſs was expreſs'd: *He taught me alſo, and ſaid unto me, Get wiſdom, get underſtanding:* He tells us alſo how the affections of his good mother did work, *Prov.* 31. 2, 3. *What my ſon? and what the ſon of my womb? and what the ſon of my vows?* The ſon of her womb, was the ſon of her vows, whom ſhe had devoted to God; thoſe Parents who have known both ſtates, the ſtate of Wrath, and the ſtate of Grace, and have experimentally felt what it is to paſs from death to life, and from the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of God, cannot but deſire that the ſame change be wrought upon their children. And as they who love themſelves with a holy love, do take God for their eternal life and happineſs, and Chriſt for their Redeemer, to redeem them from all evil, and to bring them to this happineſs; and the

Spirit for their Sanctifier, to fit them for this happineſs: So they that love their children with this holy Love, will deſire and endeavour that they be partakers with them of the ſame happineſs.

2. I proceed to give you three Characters of ungodly Children.

1. They are ſuch Children as will not be ſubject to the authority of their Parents: The reverence of Children to their Parents is ſo incorporated into the whole body of Religion, that all Religion is in vain without it: this fully appears, *Levit.* 19. 3. *Ye ſhall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my ſabbaths, I am the Lord your God.* Obſerve, this duty is here joyn'd with keeping the Lords Sabbaths, wherein Religion did always very much conſiſt: but it's often ſeen, that diſobedient children are great prophaners of the Lords-day; they are always bad, but uſually worſt on that day; and ſome of them may remember, that their firſt breaking out into ſcandalous ſins, was on the Lords-day. We are here fur-

further taught, That this duty of Reverence to Parents, is joyn'd with all Religion to God; for, saith God in effect, it's in vain for any to pretend to call me their Lord and their God, if they do not fear their Parents; and therefore wicked children are numbred among the most flagitious and worst sinners. *Ezek.* 22. 7. *In thee have they set light by father and mother*; they villified and despised them, and made nothing of them: such break all the bonds of Religion; and many hasten through a shameful and untimely death, into a dreadful and tormenting eternity, whose wickedness first began in scorning and despising their Parents.

2. They are such children as will not obey the Commands of their Parents: The godly Commands of Parents, are the means which God hath appointed, and doth often bless to make the children godly, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know, Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment:* and God commands

mands all children to obey all the holy and lawful commands of their parents, Ephes. 6. 1. *Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right:* It's the parents right that their children should obey them; and it's Gods right that they should obey them in the Lord: and this, saith the Apostle, *Col.* 3. 21. *is well-pleasing to the Lord:* so that those children do neither fear provoking God, nor care to please him, who will not obey their parents; and so are children of their parents sorrow, and of Gods wrath.

3. They are such children as are unthankful to their parents; the Apostle tells us, 1 *Tim.* 5. 4. That it is good and acceptable before God for children *to requite their parents:* and they have great things for which they should labour to requite their godly parents, *viz.* for all their care, and cost, and pains to keep them alive, and for all their diligence and faithfulness in endeavouring to make them blessed; and all the requital which the poor parents desire, is, that their children would but love

love and obey God, and not damn themselves; but these ungodly children are so far from requiting them, that like so many Dogs and Lyons, they tear in pieces the hearts and bowels of their tender parents.

3. I now come to confirm this, That it's ordinary for godly parents to have ungodly children: and for this end. I shall first give you some instances recorded in Scripture. 2*dly*, I shall instance in several cases wherein this is verified.

1. I shall only give you four instances recorded in Scripture for the confirmation hereof.

1. Instance is in *Adam* and *Eve*; these were both godly parents; and therefore in that first Evangelical promise, *Gen.* 3. 15. we have notice of the two great parties in the world; the one was the Woman, and her seed; and the other the Serpent, and his seed, and of the enmity betwixt them; and though there is only mention made of the woman, yet the man is also included; so that by the woman and her seed, we are

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to understand *Adam* and *Eve*, and Christ and his Church; and by the Serpent, and his seed, are meant the Devils, and all the devils children; and forasmuch as we find *Adam* and *Eve* of the same party with Christ and his Church, and in enmity with the Devil and his seed, we conclude them to be godly persons, and godly parents: Moreover we find *Genes.* 4. that they brought up their children in that Religion, and to worship God in the use of those Ordinances which he had then instituted as a means of their salvation: these two were the first-fruits of Christ; the first persons that ever entered into the Covenant of Grace; and Christ might say to them, as *Jacob* said to *Reuben*, Gen. 49. 3. *Ye are my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength.* At first the whole Church of God was only in these two persons, and yet these are the parents of that cursed and bloody *Cain.* And I shall observe three things in this history that render this case very doleful.

1. That

1. That *Eve* was ſo exceeding glad for the birth of *Cain:* ſome are of opinion, that ſhe thought ſhe had brought forth the promiſed Meſſiah; and that made her break out with joy, ſaying, Gen. 4. 1. *I have gotten a man from the Lord:* and yet this is he of whom the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *John* 3. 12. *He was of that wicked one, meaning the devil:* This is a common caſe, that parents are exceedingly glad for the birth of a child, and call their friends and neighbours to rejoyce with them; and yet that ſweet and pleaſant babe proves the greateſt torment to their parents, which ever they met with in their whole age.

2. Conſider his crime, he barbarouſly murdered his own brother, Gen. 4. 8. *Cain roſe up againſt Abel his brother, and ſlew him:* He conſidered not how this would grieve the heart of his good Father and Mother, nor that he was the elder brother, and therefore ought to have nouriſhed the life of the younger, and to have been a pattern of holineſs and love to him; neither did he conſider that he hated

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and murder'd not only a brother, but alſo a holy child of God, and for that which he ought to have honoured and loved him; becauſe *his brothers works were righteous:* and he conſidered not how his brothers blood would cry to God for vengeance againſt him; no bonds, or arguments, or reaſons will prevail with ungodly children.

3. Conſider the dreadful judgment of God, both upon himſelf and his poſterity: Gods judgment on his ſoul was ſo dreadful, that he deſperately cries out, *Gen.* 4. 13. *Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven*: he was caſt out of the favour of God, excommunicated from the Church, and all his poſterity were excluded from communion therewith: they are call'd the ſons and daughters of men, in oppoſition to the Sons of God, and at laſt all periſhed in the deluge of waters; and yet, I ſay, this bloody and curſed monſter was the ſon, the eldeſt ſon of the two firſt godly parents that ever were in the world.

2*d* Inſtance is in *Noah*; the firſt inſtance was in the firſt godly man in *the old world*, as the ages before the flood are called, 2 *Pet.* 2. 5. This inſtance is in the beſt man in the new World after the flood: this *Noah* hath a great character in the Scriptures, *Gen.* 6. 8, 9. *Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a juſt man, and perfect in his generations.* When all the earth was debauch'd and corrupt, *Gen.* 6. 11, 12. yet then was *Noah juſt and upright, and walked with God*, it's he that is called in 2 *Pet.* 2. 5. *A preacher of righteouſneſs:* It is he that was ſo much in the favour of God, that he and his family were ſingled out to be preſerved in the Ark, when all the world beſides were drown'd and periſh'd in the waters: yet this holy *Noah* was the Father of that wicked *Ham*, whom all the waters of *Noah* (as the Scripture calls that deluge) were not effectual to cure of his wickedneſs; but he went a wicked man into the Ark, and came wicked out; inſomuch that his own holy Father was inſpired by a prophetical ſpi-

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rit, to curse both his son and posterity, and the crime mentioned, *Gen.* 9. 22, 25. was his irreverence and disrespect to his father.

3*d* Instance is in *Isaac*, that holy Patriarch, who so greatly feared God, that his son *Jacob* gives God that honourable name, *Gen.* 31. 42. *The fear of Isaac*, meaning the God whom *Isaac* feared; yet he and that good mother *Rebekkah* were the parents of a wicked *Esau*, whom God is said to hate, *Rom.* 9. 13. I know we read *Gen.* 25. 28. that *Isaac loved Esau:* but we see that children may be greatly beloved of their parents, and yet abhorred and cursed of God.

4*th* Instance is in *David*, call'd a man after Gods own heart, whom God rais'd up to be king of *Israel:* he was a Penman, of a considerable part of the holy Scriptures; such an eminent type of Christ, that Christ himself is often call'd *David* in Scripture; yet he was the tender father of that wicked *Absolom*, who bloodily murdered his brother *Ammon*, and miserably and shamefully dyed

dyed in Treaſon and Rebellion againſt his Royal Father, whoſe bitter lamentation is yet in our ears, 2 *Sam.* 18. 33. *O my ſon Abſolom, my ſon, my ſon Abſolom! would God I had died for thee; O Abſolom my ſon, my ſon!*

2*dly*, I ſhall further inſtance in four Caſes, wherein this is often verified.

1. Thoſe Children who are moſt beloved of their parents, do often prove the moſt wicked Children. *Abſolom* was *David*'s darling; inſomuch, that although he ſet his whole kingdom in a flame, and conſtrained his father to fly for his life; yet when *David* ſent out his Army to ſuppreſs that rebellion, he gives this charge to his Commanders, in the audience of the Soldiers, 2 *Sam.* 18. 5. *Deal gently for my ſake with the young man, even with Abſolom.*

And it often happens, that the Children who have moſt of their Parents love and delight, and whoſe looks and talk they are moſt taken with, and whom they are moſt apt to boaſt of, and are moſt unwilling to part with,

and in whom they promiſe themſelves moſt content and pleaſure, do often prove the greateſt ſcourge and torment to their parents; for it is not the love of the godly parents, but the love of God that makes children holy and happy.

2. This is often the ſad caſe of ſome holy Miniſters of the Word: I know it's a Popiſh and peeviſh humour in ſome to ſay, that Miniſters children never do well; indeed every thing of Miniſters is moſt expoſed to the obſervation of people, and therefore the wickedneſs of their children is moſt obſerv'd and talk'd of; but the holy, learned, and every-way proſperous and bleſſed ſeed of divers godly Miniſters, is ſufficient to confute and ſhame the ignorance of people herein; and yet it is true that many godly Miniſters in all ages have groan'd under this ſad calamity: *Eli* was a holy Prieſt of God, but his two ſons were Devils incarnate, monſters of men, ſcandalous, ſacrilegious and adulterous ſons of *Belial*, as ap-

appears 1 *Sam.* 2. And this is no rare thing, that the Prayers, Studies, Sermons, Examples of many good Miniſters are often made ſucceſsful to bring others to Heaven, when they can by no means reſtrain their own children from running to Hell, and their own children make them do the work of their Miniſtry with grief, when often the children of drunkards, worldlings, and whoremongers will be their crown and glory in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

3. This is often true, when both parents are godly; indeed when either father or mother is wicked, no marvel if the children be hardned in their ſins by their examples: but it's uſually ſeen, that when children have both *the inſtruction of the father, and alſo the law of the mother*; and when they cry to all the Miniſters and Chriſtians about them, to help them by their prayers and counſels to ſave their children; yet all prevail not, but the holy father and mother can ſcarce keep one anothers hearts from being broken by their

ſtubborn and diſobedient children.

4. The children of godly parents often prove wicked, when God doth ſanctifie, and bleſs, and ſave the children of ungodly parents; we ſee ſometimes trees of righteouſneſs, growing in the families of the wicked, when briars and thorns grow up in the families of the righteous: We read *Matth.* 1. that *Ahaz*, a very wicked king, begat holy *Hezekiah*, and good *Hezekiah* begat *Manaſſeh*, who was an Idolater of the higheſt rate; a Witch, and ſuch a bloody murderer, that the Chronicle of his reign tells us, 2 *Kings* 21. 16. *He ſhed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jeruſalem from one end to the other* (though afterwards he is ſet forth to be the greateſt pattern of the grace of God in the Old Teſtament, as *Paul* is in the New Teſtament): It is no new ſight to ſee children of the beſt Saints in the way to Hell, and children of Atheiſts and Perſecutors in the way to Heaven; Nay, though ſome parents do perſecute their own children for loving

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and fearing God, yet they cannot debauch them; when all endeavours of godly parents will not prevail to make their children hate sin, and love God: and this is one of the saddest instances of that great mystery of Providence, mentioned *Eccles.* 8. 14. *There be just men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.*

2. *Head.* It is a very great calamity to godly parents to have wicked and ungodly children; *A foolish son* (saith the text) *is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him:* To the same purpose is that, *Prov.* 17. 21. *He that begetteth a fool, doth it to his sorrow, and the father of a fool hath no joy*; a foolish son damps all his joy: and *Prov.* 19. 13. *A foolish son is the calamity of his father.*

I shall set forth the greatness of this trouble by these Eight particulars:

1. By the matter of these parents grief.

2. By the passions that this calamity doth move and affect.

3. By comparing this with other afflictions, and shewing how this exceeds them.

4. By shewing that this makes these parents do all their work with grief and sorrow.

5. By shewing that this embitters all their other comforts.

6. By the sad concommitants of it.

7. By the several aggravations of it.

8. By instancing in some cases wherein this calamity is more grievous.

First, The matter of these parents grief is very sad, as appears in these seven things:

1. That their children are so defiled and debauched with sin, which is so loathsome to these holy parents; it vexed the righteous soul of *Lot* to see and

and hear the filthy converſation of the beaſtly *Sodomites*; how grievous then muſt it be to theſe godly parents, to ſee and hear the filthineſs of their own dear children; it is a grievous thing to a man that loves God, and Godlineſs, and Souls, to ſee a drunkard ſtaggering in the ſtreets, or to hear any man blaſpheming and reproaching his Maker and Redeemer; but none can tell but thoſe that feel it, what a ſad ſpectacle it is to ſober and godly parents to ſee their own children drunk; or how it torments them to hear their own children lying, and blaſpheming God and his Saints.

2. That their children are the children of the Devil, and under the power of Satan, and ridden by him, and carried captive by him at his will; it was a lamentable caſe of that good Mother, who came to Chriſt, ſaying, *Matth.* 15. 22. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou ſon of David, my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a devil:* yet this was not her daughters ſin, but only her great affliction: but how doleful is it to theſe

parents, who have renounced the devil themſelves, and live in continual warfare with him, to ſee the hearts, and mouths, and lives of the children, whom they have devoted to God, fill'd and poſſeſs'd with the devil, whoſe children they are, and whoſe luſts they will do; if the devil tempt the parents, their own graces will reſiſt and overcome his temptations; but they cannot ſecure their children from being overcome, and from falling into the condemnation of the devil; but with ſad hearts do ſee the Lyon of Hell running away with the lambs of their flock, and cannot recover them.

3. That their children are under the wrath and curſe of God; it did ſadly affect the father of that lunatick ſon, mentioned *Matth.* 17. 15. to ſee his ſon *fall oft into the fire, and oft into the water:* How would he ſcreech at ſuch a ſight, and cry, Ah my dear child will be burnt, my child will be drown'd! but much more terrible is it to theſe parents, who know the terrors of the Lord,

Lord, to know that their children have cut off the entail of the Covenant of Grace, and are every moment ready to fall into the hands of the living God! when ſuch parents are, with faith, reading the curſes of Gods Law, how doth it cut them to the heart to think, that they are then reading their childrens doom.

4. That their children are under thoſe black characters, which are given in Scripture to ungodly men; for the faith of theſe parents makes all perſons have that name in their hearts, which they have in the Word: And as God is no reſpecter of perſons, ſo Faith, ſo far as it prevails, reſpecteth not the perſons of any, no not of a mans own children; but becauſe they are more under their notice and obſervation than others, and becauſe they are more concern'd for them, therefore the deeper impreſſions do theſe characters make on their hearts; ſo that this is the miſery of theſe parents, that whileſt they look on perſons through the glaſs of the

the Scriptures, and ſee many to be the jewels, and treaſure, and children, and heirs of God, and the glorious bride and ſpouſe of Chriſt; they muſt and do judge their own wicked children to be a generation of vipers, and ſerpents, and dogs, and ſwine, and lyons, and bears, and wolves, as God calls them in his Word.

5. That the anger and diſpleaſure of God appears ſo much againſt theſe good parents herein; indeed the ſenſe of their own folly muſt make them juſtifie God in this ſharp correction, and cauſe them to ſay with *Solomon*, Prov. 26.3. As it is meet that there be *a whip for the horſe, and a bridle for the aſſe*; ſo is it, that there be *a rod for the fools back*: But this is very grievous, that God ſhould correct them with a ſcourge made of their own bowels, and ſhould chaſten a bleſſed father with a curſed child; his holy anger muſt be acknowledged herein; for when the child deſpiſeth his father, God himſelf doth juſtly ſpit in the fathers face.

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6. The ſhame and diſgrace which comes to them hereby, *Prov.* 19. 26. *He that waſteth his father, and chaſeth away his mother, is a ſon that cauſeth ſhame:* Every one will be ready to reflect upon their parents, and to ſay, Surely theſe children were never taught to ſerve God, who do ſo ſacrifice themſelves to the ſervice of the devil.

7. Both parents are deeply affected for the trouble and miſery that comes hereby to one another; their love to, and ſympathy with one another, makes the burden of both more uneaſie: The good father is not only troubled with a wicked child, but alſo for the bitterneſs and ſorrow of his wife; and the good mother is not only troubled with the wicked child, but alſo for the grief of her husband; the mothers heart bleeds to ſee the tears, and to hear the groans of the afflicted father, and cries out, Oh, what a child have I brought forth, that ſo much deprives me of the comfort of a loving husband, and is like to break his heart,

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and to make me a deſolate and diſconſolate widow: The father mourns to ſee the tears, and the ſad countenance, and to hear the groans of the diſtreſſed mother; and is ready to cry out, Wo is me, that the child of my bowels is deſtroying the wife of my boſom; and yet theſe hard-hearted children are not affected herewith; but let the parents ſigh, they will ſing; let the parents weep and mourn, they will rant and roar; and care no more to break their parents hearts, than to break a Tobacco-pipe; and will not abate a lie, or oath, or cup, to ſave the lives of their tender parents.

Secondly, The greatneſs of this calamity appears by the paſſions in the parents, which are moved and affected hereby. I ſhall only inſtance in three paſſions, Fear, Anger, and Sorrow.

1. *Fear*: This is a troubleſome paſſion, and godly parents are never out of fear of their wicked children; they are

are afraid that every one that knocks at the door, and that every poſt, and every friend that comes to viſit them, brings them ſome ſad tidings of their diſobedient children. I ſhall amplifie this, by inſtancing in three great Evils, which ſuch parents are greatly perplexed with the fear of.

1. They are afraid leſt their children are in the practice of ſome great ſins: this was *Jobs* fear, when his children were feaſting together, *Job* 1. 5. *Job* ſaid, It *may be my ſons have ſinn'd and curs'd God in their hearts:* their children are ſeldom out of their ſight, but the good parents are in fear of this; they know their children are always expos'd to the devils temptations, and to the ſnares of the world, and to the allurements of evil company; and that their corrupt hearts are ſet to comply with all; and that they have provoked God to give them up to their own luſts; and therefore they are in continual fear, leſt theſe poor children are lying, or ſwearing, or curſing, or whoring, or drunk,

drunk, and defiling, and debauching, and deſtroying themſelves and others.

2. They are in fear leſt ſome heavy judgment of God will befall them in this life: And thus *David*, when his ſon *Abſolom* was in the head of a high rebellion againſt his father, and the battel was to be fought with the Rebels, was fearful leſt his ſon ſhould then periſh in his ſins: theſe parents know that their poor children are out of Gods way, and *as birds wandring from the neſt*, Prov. 27. 8. are expos'd to all manner of danger; they know what the word threatens againſt them, and what fearful inſtances there are of the vengeance of God upon diſobedient children; and therefore they are in fear, leſt their ſins ſhould bring them to ſome untimely, and ſhameful death.

3. They are in fear of their eternal damnation; they are ſenſible that their children *are children of wrath*, and do live in thoſe ſins *for which the wrath of God comes on the children of diſobedience*;

dience; and these parents believe what Hell is; for as faith in the promises is the substance of things hoped for; so faith, as it believes the threatnings, is the substance of things feared; and therefore they cannot but tremble to think, that their dear lambs, whom they so tenderly nourish'd and cherish'd, are in danger every moment to be cast into the fire that is prepared for devils.

2. *Anger* is another passion that is moved in godly parents, with the wickedness of their children: and this is troublesome; for a man is never out of trouble whilst he is in anger; and the more the wills of these parents are bent to have their children godly, the more are they displeas'd, and provok'd to anger by their sins: they are angry to see them provoke that God whom they themselves are so careful to please; and to see them destroying their precious souls, which they are labouring to save; and to see them waste those estates on their filthy lusts, which they have got

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by their care, and labour, and prayers: they cannot but think of them with anger, and ſpeak of them with anger, and look at them with anger: and thus their children which ſhould be their delight and pleaſure, are a continual croſs and vexation to them.

3. *Sorrow:* They are deeply affected with grief and ſorrow for the wickedneſs of their children; the parents graces cauſe them to mourn for their childrens ſins; their ſaving-knowledge makes their hearts bleed to ſee their children ſcorn and deſpiſe that glory which they ſee in God and Chriſt; and whilſt they by faith are feeding on Chriſt, it grieves them to ſee their children feeding themſelves with the dirty pleaſures of ſin; their love to God makes them groan, that their children love ſin the worſt evil, and hate God the chiefeſt good.

Thirdly, I proceed to ſhew the greatneſs of this calamity, by comparing it with other troubles, and ſhewing

ing how this exceeds them. I shall instance in four other Troubles.

1. This is a greater calamity than to be without Children; so that if God had said of those Parents, as he said of him, *Jer.* 22. 30. *Write ye this man, and this woman childless*, the punishment had not been so great, as to be afflicted with wicked children: such parents may say with our Saviour in another case, *Luke* 23. 29. *Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.* As it's better to have no herbs in your gardens, than to have only stinking-weeds that cumber the ground; and better to have no beasts in your ground, than a company of foxes and wolves; so it's better to have no children, than to have only such who are the continual shame, and plague, and torment of their parents.

2. It's a greater misery than to have diseased, or deformed children: This indeed is a sore affliction, to be the pa-

rents of ſick, or blind, or lame, or monſtrous children, becauſe ſuch children are naturally diſabled to do that ſervice to God, and their generation, and their parents, which otherwiſe they might do: but this is not ſo grievous as to have wicked children; for they that are moſt diſeaſed and uncomely, are often called to be the bleſſed and glorious children and heirs of God, and the amiable and beautiful bride and ſpouſe of Chriſt, when all wicked children are the filthy and loathſome children of the devil.

3. This is more grievous than the death of children. I know it's matter of deep ſorrow when parents may ſay with the tender Patriarch, *Gen.* 42. 36. *Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not:* My ſon is dead, and is not; and my dear daughter is dead, and is not; but this ſorrow is not laſting, the impreſſion of it uſually doth, and ſhould wear off; but wicked children are conſtant troubles to their parents, and cauſe them to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 31. 10.

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My days are ſpent with grief, and my years with ſighing.

4. This calamity is greater than perſecution from wicked men, though that be alſo very grievous; inſomuch that *Paul*, a man of a great ſpirit, was ſo affected herewith, that he ſolemnly beſeecheth the *Roman* Chriſtians, *Rom.* 15. 30. *For the Lord Jeſus ſake, and for the love of the Spirit, that they would ſtrive together with him in prayer to God for him*, to deliver him from perſecuting-men; it is a ſad caſe to be ſmitten and wounded in our names by lying and ſlanderous tongues: *David*, and Chriſt in him, tells us, *Pſal.* 69. 20. That *reproach hath broken his heart*: It is ſad for the jewels of God to be accounted and uſed as the ſink and jakes of the world, and to have our eſtates waſted and ſpoyl'd, and to be expos'd to beggery and want, and to be drag'd from our healthful and pleaſant habitations and families, and to be caſt among rogues and thieves into naſty and loathſome priſons, and to have our innocent

and precious blood ſhed by barbarous men: but all this is not ſo grievous as to be tormented by wicked children; for in that caſe we are diſtreſſed by the ſins of our enemies; and if ſo, as *David* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 55. 12. *We could have born it:* But in this caſe we are afflicted by the ſins of our own children, and may ſay with *David*, when he was reviled by *Shimei*, 2 Sam. 16. 11. *Behold my ſon which came forth of my bowels, ſeeketh my life: how much more may this Benjamite?* It is a far greater torment to have the children of our own bowels tear and break our hearts, than to be deſtroy'd by mercileſs enemies.

Fourthly, The greatneſs of this calamity is ſeen, in that it cauſeth theſe good parents to do all their work with ſorrow. I ſhall inſtance in three ſorts of Works which they do in the bitterneſs of their Souls: 1. Natural. 2. Civil. 3. Religious Works. He that hath a wicked child on his heart, doth all theſe with a ſad heart.

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1. Natural Works: these they do with sorrow: *They are fed with the bread of tears, and drink their tears in great measure,* as the Psalmist speaks in another case, *Psal.* 80. 5. And as it's said, in *the prayer of the afflicted,* Psal. 102. 9. *They eat ashes like bread, and mingle their drink with weeping.*

2. They do their Civil Works with grief: this makes them labour with sorrow in their particular callings; it was *Solomons* trouble to think that *a fool should have the rule of his labour wherein he laboured, and shewed himself wise under the Sun,* Eccles. 2. 18, 19, 20. And this sad case is often observ'd, that the same estates which were the fruit of the wise and good parents prayers, and diligence, are consum'd upon the childrens lusts; and that the good creatures which were a blessing to the parents, and wherewith they did honour God, and feed Christ in his members, do prove a curse to their children, and weapons in their hands wherewith they fight against God and his people.

3. This also causeth them to do their Religious Works in grief and sorrow. I shall only instance in two particulars.

1. This makes them instruct these poor ungodly children with sorrow: It is a doleful case when men can have their dogs to come at their whistle, and their horses to yield to the bridle, and their oxen to submit to the yoke; but their unruly children will not be subject to the holy government of their parents; they can readily learn filthy words, and wicked actions from their ungodly School-fellows, or Fellow-apprentices, or debauch'd companions; but they will not hear the instruction of their father, nor obey the law of their mother.

2. This causeth them to pray for such children with sorrow; for according as is the spiritual state of the children, so are their holy parents affected in prayer to God for them; when they can in prayer call upon God as the Father of their children, and can

present

preſent their children to God as ſuch, who are born of God, and adopted of him, and can beg mercy for them who are the veſſels of mercy, then they do, as the Apoſtle for the *Philippians*, Chap. 1. 4. *In every prayer make requeſt for them with joy:* but when children are manifeſtly wicked, and their good parents muſt in prayer to God call them what they are, and muſt ſay, Lord, my poor children are children of the devil, children of diſobedience, children of thy wrath, lying, ſwearing, covetous, drunken, unclean, ſtubborn children; Oh pity, pardon, ſave, convert them; they pray for them, but they pray in the ſorrow and anguiſh of their ſouls.

Fifthly, I come to ſhew how wicked children embitter all the comforts of their good parents; ſo that as *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* 17. 21. *A father of a fool hath no joy.* I ſhall exemplifie this in four particulars.

1. The good parents cannot be ſo comfortable and delightful to one another as they would be, when both are in bitterneſs for their wicked children; the husband cannot be ſuch a comfort to his wife, when he is almoſt in continual anger and ſorrow for his wicked child; nor the wife ſuch a delight to her husband, when her heart is bleeding for her ungodly child; for if they have no joy in themſelves, as was ſaid before, they cannot be ſo much the joy and delight of one another: but when they lye down, this makes them water their bed with tears, and they awake with ſorrow, with a wicked child on their hearts.

2. They cannot take ſo much comfort as they would in the other children that are godly; not that they love them leſs, but rather more; but their joy in them is much interrupted hereby. Suppoſe among many children there be but one ungodly child, that one is a diſturbance and annoyance to the whole family; that one ſinner (as

Solomon

Solomon ſpeaks in a more general caſe) deſtroys much good; it grieves them to think, that whereas that one child was in the ſame Covenant, and had the ſame dedication to God by Baptiſm, and the ſame affection and education from the parents with all the other children; yet the reſt are veſſels of mercy, but this ſeems to be a veſſel of wrath.

3. They cannot take ſo much comfort in the victory over their own ſins, when they ſee the ſame corruptions which are abhorred, and mortified, and forſaken by the parents, breaking out, and reigning in the children.

4. This interrupts their joy in God and Jeſus Chriſt; when ſuch parents muſt with the ſame faith believe Gods wrath to their children, as they believe his love to themſelves; and when they look upon God as their Father, they muſt look upon him as an enemy to their Children; and when they ſay, We hope Heaven is our portion and

place,

place, it must grieve them that their children will not go with them thither.

Sixthly, The greatness of this affliction appears further by the concommitants of it. I shall only instance in three things that usually accompany it, which make it more grievous.

1. Such children do often impoverish their parents; *Solomon* tells us, that a wicked child *wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother*; such children care not if they starve their poor parents, so that they can feed their own lusts; and it's often seen, that a plentiful estate is consum'd by riotous children.

2. Such children do often debauch and corrupt the other children, and make their brethren in nature, to be their *brethren in iniquity*: and often their brothers and sisters are easier inticed to sin by a wicked brother, than drawn to God by a godly father: and if any of the other children be godly,

these

these wicked ones do hate, and revile, and persecute them like wicked *Cain*, who slew his brother because his works were righteous.

3. They bring reproach upon that good Religion which their good parents profess and practise: and thus *Eli*'s sons made men *abhor the offerings of the Lord*; and with some the holy lives of the parents cannot wipe off the reproach which is cast on Religion by the wickedness of their children.

Seventhly, The greatness of this affliction appears by these eight Aggravations of it.

1. It aggravates their grief to remember what pleasure and delight these children were to them in their childhood; it torments them now to see their sweet and pleasant smiles, turn'd into scornful and disdainful looks at their parents, and their pretty broken words turn'd into oaths and lies, and other rotten speeches; and to think that

that theſe who once were ſo forward to claſp about their necks, and to kiſs them, and to run at their commands, do now *lift up the heel againſt them.*

2. It aggravates their ſorrow to ſee themſelves ſo miſerably diſappointed in their former hopes of theſe children; *Hope deferred* (ſaith *Solomon*) *makes the heart ſick:* but to be croſs'd and diſappointed in hopes of ſo great mercy, doth even break the heart. When theſe parents remember how pleaſant it was to them to hear theſe children liſp out their Catechiſms, and to hear their good words of God and Chriſt; it cannot but be very grievous to them, that the ſame children which they did with *Hannah* lend to the Lord, ſhould ſell themſelves to the devil.

3. It aggravates their ſorrow, that their children are ſo void of love to their parents, and to ſee that the company of lyars, and drunkards, and whoremongers, and thieves, is more delightful to them than the company of their parents.

4. It

4. It aggravates their ſorrow to look upon the holy children of others; when they may ſay, Yonder are children that make a glad father and mother, when the children of our bodies, and counſels, and prayers, and vows, and tears, live as if their father was an *Amorite*, and their mother an *Hittite*.

5. Aggravation is, in caſe the parents have but one child, and that proves fooliſh and diſobedient: and of this there be many inſtances; the Scripture, to ſet forth the ſaddeſt kind of mourning, compares it to the mourning for an only ſon, *Jer.* 6. 26. *Make thee mourning as for an only ſon, moſt bitter lamentation.* Zech. 12. 10. *They ſhall mourn as one that mourneth for an only ſon.* I know theſe Scriptures ſpeak of parents mourning for the death of an only ſon; but it's not ſo ſad to follow an only ſon to the grave, as to ſee an only child live to the diſhonour of God, to be a curſe to his generation, and to be continually deſtroying his precious ſoul; it's a very bitter caſe, when as much

much love, and kindneſs, and care, and coſt, and pains, and prayers, and faſtings, are beſtowed upon one child, as other parents beſtow upon many children; and notwithſtanding all this, one child ſhould prove ſuch a monſter of wickedneſs, as if the ſins of many uugodly children met in him.

6. Aggravation. When Gods holy Miniſters are the Fathers of fools, which (I have told you) often happens: and this is a moſt dreadful caſe for ſuch who have *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, and yet muſt bind over their own children to the wrath of God: ſuch know *the terrors of the Lord*, and the torments of Hell more than others; and therefore muſt be more affected to believe, that this at preſent is the portion of their own children.

7. Aggravation. When ſuch children whom their parents deſign'd to ſerve God in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, do prove ungodly: this is matter of great lamentation, for the parents to intend them for the higheſt office in the

the Church, and give them education for that end, that theſe children ſhould make themſelves as *ſalt without ſavour, which is good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and trodden under foot of men.*

8. Aggravation. When children are a grief to their parents in their old age, and do as it were throw dirt upon their hoary heads, which is their *crown of glory*; it's the command of God, *Prov.* 23. 22. *Deſpiſe not thy mother when ſhe is old: Solomon* tells us, *Eccleſ.* 12. That the days of old age are *evil days*; their very age is a troubleſome and incurable diſeaſe; now the *graſhopper*, every light thing is a burden to them, and therefore it muſt be more troubleſome to them to be then tormented with wicked children, when *the ſtrong men* (as Divines think) *Solomon* calls the legs, do bow themſelves, and their children who ſhould be a ſtaff and ſupport to them, do break their hearts, and cauſe their grey-hairs to go with ſorrow to the grave.

I now

I now come to make application of this discourse.

Use 1. Let such parents praise and honour God, whom God hath bless'd with wise, and holy, and obedient children; whether by those words in *Psal.* 144. 12. *David* means children accomplish'd with natural or spiritual endowments, or both, I shall not determine; but to apply them to the case in hand, I say it's the great mercy of God to you, that when so many children are as noisome weeds, your sons should be as hopeful *plants grown up in their youth*; and when so many make themselves ugly, and deform'd with sin, *your daughters should be as corner-stones* (in which is seen the beauty of the building, and the art and skill of the workman) *polished after the similitude of a palace.* Do not hence conclude, that you are better parents than others, or have had more care in the education of your children than others, but ascribe all to the free grace of God, *who will have*

have mercy upon whom he will have mercy.

2. Let none presume to censure godly parents for their wicked children; *To him that is afflicted*, saith *Job*, *pity should be shew'd him from his friend.* Have they not trouble enough already, but will you add to their affliction? They have not hereby forfeited the good thoughts and esteem which you should have of them; and if you judge them for this, ye must judge as wise and holy Saints of God as ever were in the world; though God herein doth sharply correct them, yet he will not allow you to sit in judgment, and to pass sentence upon them: I say to you, as *Job* to his friends, *Hold your peace, let them alone*; and leave them to stand or fall to their own Master.

3. This should fill the hearts of these holy parents with revenge upon Sin and Satan, which have so

debauch'd, and defiled, and deſtroy'd their dear children: If a man ſhould murder your child, a ſpirit of revenge would riſe in you, and you would ſay to ſuch a one, I will have thy life and blood for the life and blood of my child; but Sin and Satan have deſtroy'd both the precious ſoul and body of the child; therefore labour, as for other reaſons, ſo for this alſo, to be reveng'd of them: Labour to do as *David* did by the Lyon and the Bear, which took a Lamb out of his flock, he ſlew both the Lyon and the Bear, and delivered the Lamb; ſo do all ye can to reſcue your poor lambs out of the jaws of Satan; however labour to hate Sin and Satan more, to promote Gods honour and kingdom, and the ſalvation of ſouls more: and this is the way to be reveng'd on Sin and Satan for the ruine of your children.

4. I do

4. I do hence exhort all holy and obedient children to acknowledge the grace of God to them, that they are or have been the joy and crown of their parents: It is his diſtinguiſhing grace that made you to differ from all wicked children, and perhaps from ſome that came out of the ſame womb, and ſucked the ſame mothers breaſts as you did. Conſider four things which are great matter of praiſe.

1. That ye are the children of holy parents; that ye may comfortably come to God in prayer, and ſay, we are the children of thy ſervant our father; we are thy ſervants, and the children of thy handmaid our mother: bleſs God for your parents good counſels and examples, and for a great part of an age of prayers, which ye are daily receiving the benefit of; if your parents are dead, and in heaven, it

may put you into a holy and ſpiritual frame to think of the graces of God that did ſhine in them.

2. That the ſame graces which dwelt in your good parents, are in you: *Paul* ſpeaks of it as matter of praiſe to God, that the ſame faith was in *Timothy*, which dwelt firſt in his Grandmother *Lois*, and his Mother *Eunice*; and the Apoſtle *John* rejoyced greatly, that he found the children of the elect Lady walking in truth.

3. That thou art freed from thoſe ſtings of conſcience, which graceleſs children ſhall one day feel for their diſobedience to their parents; thou mayeſt joyfully reflect, that thou waſt the joy of thy holy parents, and that their lives have been made ſweeter, and their croſſes eaſier by thee; that thou art the honour and ſeal of their holy education, when wicked children are the ſhame and reproach of their parents.

4. That

4. That thou haſt a right to that rich and precious promiſe annext to the fifth Commandment, and mention'd *Epheſ.* 6. 2, 3. So that thou may'ſt be aſſur'd that it *ſhall go well with thee* both in this world, and in the world to come; I do ſeriouſly profeſs, I had rather have a right to that one promiſe made to obedient children, than to the beſt eſtate and inheritance under the Sun.

I ſhall finiſh this diſcourſe,

1. In preſcribing ſome means to be us'd by thoſe that may be, or are parents, to prevent this calamity.

2. I ſhall direct thoſe parents that groan under this calamity, how to bear it.

3. I ſhall give a ſerious exhortation to ſuch children who are the grief and bitterneſs of their parents.

Firſt, I ſhall preſcribe means to be us'd to prevent this calamity.

1. Uſe all holy prudence and care in your choice of a yoke-fellow; for if ye make your ſelves the husbands or wives of fools, ye are like in time to become the fathers or mothers of fools; when before the flood, the members of Gods Church married with a wicked generation, *Geneſ.* 6. 2. they brought forth a wicked poſterity; but to have a holy yoke-fellow, is the way to have a holy ſeed; and therefore what ye would moſt deſire to have for your ſelves, that labour to find in the perſon who is to be one fleſh with you: thou wouldſt have thy ſelf born of God; thou wouldſt have the Image of God, and the life of Chriſt in thy ſelf. Labour that theſe things be in the perſon whom thou chuſeſt for thy yoke-fellow; but never make choice of one for

thy

thy husband or wife, whom thou ſhouldſt not chuſe for thy companion.

2. Be faithful and upright with God, *Prov.* 20. 7. *The juſt man walketh in his integrity, and his children are bleſſed after him:* If you would have grace and mercy for your children, love and pleaſe the God of all grace and mercy; whatever ſecret ſins are in thee, kill thoſe ſins for thy poor childrens ſake, leſt the ſins you too much harbour in your own hearts, do break out in your childrens lives: Parents may often ſee their own ſins againſt their heavenly father in their childrens diſobedience to them; when your children deſpiſe you, remember your want of honour, and fear, and reverence of God; when they vex and trouble you, remember how ye have griev'd and provoked him; when they decline your company, remember how your hearts have

wandered from God in his Ordinances.

3. Bewail and beg pardon of God for your failings heretofore to your parents; for many do often reap from their own children, what they formerly ſow'd by their ſins againſt their parents; and their miſcarriages to their parents do fall upon them in the wickedneſs of their children: the beſt may ſadly reflect upon their want of due honour, and obedience, and thankfulneſs to their parents; ye may remember your peeviſh looks, undecent behaviour to them; your grieving them in quarrelling with your brethren and ſiſters; your unjuſt cenſuring them for partiality in their love to their children, and judging them to want love to you, when you were wanting in your duty to them; and many, who are now godly parents themſelves, may remember, that by greater ſins in their youth they were the grief and bitter-

bitterneſs of their fathers and mothers; and therefore pray mightily to God to pardon you, and not to viſit theſe ſins upon you in the diſobedience of your children.

4. Pray to God not to viſit your ſins upon your children: When *Manaſſeh* was in Heaven, *Amon* his ſon followed the ſteps of his unconverted eſtate; and *Jehoiakim* was carried captive into *Babylon* for the ſins of *Manaſſeh*: Pray that your children may not be like you in any thing, wherein ye are unlike God; and that *their teeth may not be ſet on edg for the ſowre grapes that ye have eaten.*

5. Be deeply affected with the corruption of nature in your children: For as no man will value a Saviour for himſelf, who is not convinc'd of the ſin and miſery which he muſt be ſaved from; ſo ye muſt be ſenſible of your childrens ſins, or elſe ye cannot labour for their ſalvation;

tion. When your ſweet babes are born, ye rejoyce to find that in Gods book all their members were written; but ye ſhould alſo be ſenſible of that body of ſin they are born with, and that by nature they are young Atheiſts, and Infidels, and haters of God, and baſphemers, and whoremongers, and lyars, and thieves, and murderers; for they are naturally inclin'd to theſe and all other ſins, and are by nature children of the wrath of the infinite God; and being convinc'd of this, ye will find that your chief care of them ſhould be to ſave them from this dreadful ſtate of ſin and miſery.

6. Be convinc'd what a great deal of work lies upon you to endeavour the ſalvation of your children: young children always make a great deal of work; they make work for parents, and work for ſervants, and work for all that are about them; but to ſave them from

ſin

ſin and hell, is the greateſt work that belongs to their parents: for this purpoſe they have a great deal a work to do in their own hearts; they muſt know, and believe, and love, and obey the doctrine of ſalvation themſelves, that they may be able, and fit to inſtruct their children therein; for a man cannot *train up his child in the way he ſhould go*, if he do not know the way himſelf: We read *Deut. 6. 6, 7. Theſe words ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children*; it's fitly render'd in the margin, thou ſhalt *whet or ſharpen* them; the word of God is more keen and ſharp when it hath firſt done its work on the parents hearts, and ſo comes from their hearts to their children: Parents muſt keep their own graces in exerciſe, to put authority and ſavour in all that they ſay and do for the ſalvation of their children: Grace muſt work in their

prayers;

prayers; grace muſt rule their tongues; grace muſt guide the rod, and grace muſt ſhine in their lives: and then it's a great work which is to be wrought in the children; it is a great work for them who are *born of the fleſh*, to be *born of the ſpirit*; a great work to make Religion and Godlineſs natural to them; to make the *children of the devil* to become the *children of God Almighty:* and parents muſt conſtantly labour in the uſe of means to accompliſh this work.

7. Be mighty in prayer for your children; for all the good ye deſire for them muſt come from God, and therefore muſt be beg'd by prayer; it is in vain for them to be taught of us, except they be taught of God; *Whoſe words, Lord,* (ſaith holy *Auguſtine*) *were they but thine, which by my faithful mother thou haſt ſung in my heart.* Pray, and pray in faith and hope; *thy ears* (ſaith *Auguſtine* again)

again) *were at my mothers heart, when she pray'd for me*; ye must pray with tender and melting hearts: the same Father tells us, that his mothers tears watered the earth when she pray'd for him: and ye must pray for their salvation: this also *Augustine* calls the *hinge* of his holy mothers prayers for him.

8. Solemnly dedicate them to God by baptism; and then ye must heartily consent that God alone be the eternal life and happiness of you and your children, and that Jesus Christ be their and your Redeemer, to redeem you and them from all sin and misery, and to bring both to God; and that the Holy Ghost be their and your Sanctifier, that by him you and they may have a Scripture-right unto, and be made meet and fit for this happiness.

9. When they are capable of it, instruct them in the Covenant, which by baptism they were solemnly entered

tered into. For this end ye muſt diligently teach them theſe ſix things:

1. To know the evil and danger of ſin; for till they come to know what ſin is, and what it is to be ſaved, or damn'd, and what it is to loſe, or enjoy God; they will not value or accept of Chriſt, but will deſpiſe the Redeemer of the World as good for nothing: ye muſt therefore labour to make ſin odious, and Chriſt precious to your children, and then they will value Chriſt, and obey you: It was propheſied of *John* the Baptiſt, that he was to *prepare the way of the Lord, and to turn the children to the parents:* ſo let it be your care to make way for Chriſt in your childrens hearts; and if ye prevail in that, they will be obedient to you.

2. Inform your ſelves and them in the doctrine of God the Father, Son,

Son, and Holy Ghoſt: for this is the doctrine whereinto they are baptized; and by baptiſm they are ſolemnly entered into Covenant with theſe ſacred perſons, againſt the fleſh, Satan, and the world: ſhew them the glory and love of God the Father in chuſing, ordaining, fitting, and ſending Jeſus Chriſt, and in commanding him to be a ſacrifice for us; inform them that God the Father is the fountain of life; for *Chriſt lives by the Father:* the fountain of Authority; for Chriſt received *all power in heaven and earth* from him: the fountain of all the Chriſtian Religion; for Chriſt firſt heard theſe truths from the Father, and then made them known to us; and the fountain of glory, for the Father *hath exalted Chriſt*, and all glorified Saints are the *bleſſed of the Father.* Labour by theſe and all other means, that God the Father have the greateſt place in your children

drens hearts. Teach them to know, and prize Jesus Christ; without this they cannot be true Christians: shew them all the fulness and glory of the Godhead in Jesus Christ: Labour to make them see his glory as the only begotten Son of God; and all that he as Mediator and Redeemer hath done in the state of his humiliation, and is doing, and will do in the state of his exaltation, for the salvation of lost sinners. Labour to imprint these great Truths upon their hearts.

1. That it was the Will and Law of God the Father, that God the Son in our nature should be a sacrifice for our sins: this fully appears *Heb.* 10. 5, &c. *A body hast thou prepared*, or fitted *me*, meaning to be a sacrifice: and, saith he, *Lo I come to do thy will, O God:* and *Psal.* 40. *Thy law is in my heart*; meaning that will and law of the Father, which bound

bound him to offer and sacrifice himself for our sins.

2. That Jesus Christ by *his obedience to the death of the cross*, did perfectly obey and fulfil this law and will of God the Father.

3. That all salvation and happiness is by the Covenant of Grace setled upon all, and only those who believe and obey the Gospel, only for the sake of this sacrifice and obedience of Jesus Christ: and therefore, saith the Apostle, *Heb.* 10. 10. *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all:* that is, by Christs fulfilling the will of his Father, in once sacrificing himself for sinners, we and all true believers are sanctified, that is, perfectly saved.

Ye must also acquaint them with the office and work of the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour tells us, *John* 16. 13. is to guide or lead

them into all truth; that is, to inable them to believe, and love, and obey the saving truths of God reveil'd in the Gospel: for to the end, that they may know and keep their baptismal-covenant, they must know how all the Three sacred persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are interested in the great work of Salvation.

3dly, Labour to convince your children of the Excellency of the Life of Religion, and obedience to God: commend this to them as the most honourable life; for our Saviour tells us, *John* 12. 26. *If any man serve me, him will my father honour. What shall be done to the man* (saith *Ahasuerus*) *whom the king will honour?* But who is able to tell what shall be done to the man whom the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will honour? Let them also know, that this is the wisest life; it's *Jobs* inquiry, *Where shall wisdom be found?*

and,

and, saith he, *Job* 28. 28. *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding:* And further, that it is the safest life, for God is a *shield*, and *rock*, and *wall* to all that obey him; and although such things which they have in common with other men are expos'd to danger and loss, yet their persons, and their whole portion is always safe; and also, that this is the most gainful life, for hereby Saints gain God, and Christ, and Heaven, and lose nothing; for we cannot lose by a Saviour, who saves us from all evil, and brings us into the possession of all good; and though death it self strips us naked of all things under the Sun, yet death is unspeakable gain to all who live this life: and ye must further assure them, that this is the most pleasant life, for it is a life of faith, and love, and praise, and joy, and a life of victory over sin; and they

who live this life, have all things to please them; they have God to please them; Christ and his Merits to please them; and a prospect of a holy and a blessed Eternity to please them: ye would never be the fathers and mothers of fools, if ye could perswade your children to be so wise, as to prize and love a life of obedience to God.

4. Commend to your children the glory and amiableness of the House and Church of God: this is the body whereinto they are baptized; take your child with you, and *go walk about Sion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof, and mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces*, as ye are taught, Psal. 45. 9. Present to their view King Jesus, and *at his right hand standing the Queen* (his Church) *in gold of Ophir*, Psal. 45. 9. say to them, as the Angel said to *John*, Rev. 21. 9. *Come hither, and I will shew*

ſhew you the bride, the Lambs wife: ſhew them that glorious ſight, *Rev.* 12. 1. *The woman cloathed with the Sun, and upon her head* (that bright and glorious conſtellation) *a crown of twelve Stars*, that ſo the company of thoſe who live in communion with God and Jeſus Chriſt, may be deſirable, and delightful to them; and that they may forſake evil company, which is often the bane of youth.

5. Teach them to eſteem aright of Gods Ordinances; for by baptiſm they are ſolemnly admitted into that houſe and family which is bleſſed with theſe, as the means of ſalvation: Labour to beget in them good thoughts of Gods Miniſters; for ye ſhall ever find, that thoſe children will deſpiſe you who make light of them: teach them to pray; ye can never have comfort in your children till they cry to God, *Abba Father:* teach them to know, and prize,

and long for the Lords-Supper, and therein to take Christ and all Salvation in a little bread and wine; teach them to honour and delight in the Lords-day, as the Diamond in the ring of time; those children are always the honour and joy of their godly parents, who make conscience to keep holy the Lords-day.

6. Make them sensible that time is short and precious, that an eternity of glory and misery is at hand; and that death, and judgment, and heaven or hell are at the door of young children.

I shall further add five Directions to godly parents, to prevent this sad calamity.

1. Labour to save your children from those sins which provoke God, and will destroy them, as well as from those sins which will also bring

loss

loss and reproach upon you: some are sadly affected to see their children given to drunkenness, or whoredom, or the like sins; but are not so much concern'd for their unbelief, and impenitency, and want of love to God, and for their covetousness; which shews such parents to have too much of the love of the world, and too little love to God and their childrens souls; but we must take our measures of the evil and danger of sin from the word of God, which tells us, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. that the *covetous*, as well as *drunkards and whoremongers, shall not inherit the kingdom of God:* and this will teach parents not only to mourn over a debauch'd child, but also over a covetous, though he be a wealthy child.

2. Observe what sins your children are most prone unto, and labour to fill them with revenge and hatred against those sins: If your

child have a foot, or hand gangren'd, ye will cut off the incurable member, rather than bury your child; ſo ye ſhould do what ye can to pull out the right eye, and to cut off the right hand; and the right foot of ſin in your children, rather than ſuffer their bodies and ſouls to be caſt into Hell: As ye ſhould eſpecially kill thoſe ſins in your ſelves, which your natures are moſt inclin'd unto; ſo ye ſhould do by your children, who are ſo great a part of your ſelves: we are taught, Prov. 20. 11. *That even a child is known by his doing, whether his work be pure, or whether it be right:* Parents may much diſcern by the manners and ways of their children in their childhood, what they are like to prove in their riper years; and therefore they muſt obſerve them, that they may encourage them in the good, and diſcourage them in the evil, which they then appear to be moſt bent unto.

3. Chuſe

3. Chuſe to place your children in families of holineſs and prayer; ye will not plant your trees among briars and thorns; much leſs ſhould ye chuſe to place your children to ſerve thoſe who will not ſerve God.

4. Give them due correction: this hath God commanded to kill their ſins, and to ſave their ſouls, Prov. 23. 13, 14. *Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beateſt him with the rod, he ſhall not dye: thou ſhalt beat him with the rod, and ſhalt deliver his ſoul from hell:* It is better thy child be whipt, than damn'd; and let not thy childs weeping and crying under the rod move thee to withhold due correction, *Prov.* 19. 18. *Chaſten thy ſon, and let not thy ſoul ſpare for his crying:* If your childs bone be out of joint, ye will have it ſet, though he cry and bawl under the hand of the Surgeon; and will ſay, It's better

he

he cry now, than be lame so long as he lives; so it is better your children cry now under the rod of their father, than that they should weep and wail for ever under the wrath of the infinite God: and therefore that ye may perform this duty, take these five Directions.

1. Do not allow your servants to correct your children; for correction is an act of authority, and therefore cannot belong to those who are meerly your servants; I would not have parents to permit their children to despise and abuse their servants; but for parents to suffer their servants to correct their children, is the way to make their children stubborn, their servants proud, and themselves contemptible in the eyes of both.

2. Convince them that it is your duty to correct them for their sins; and therefore it is advisable, that you

you make them get those Scriptures without book, which bind you to correct them; also some of those Scriptures which condemn the sins which you correct them for, that their consciences may justifie you in doing your duty; and that they may be more afraid of sin, than the rod; and of provoking God, than offending you.

3. Correct them betimes, *Prov.* 13. 24. and *Prov.* 19. 18. *Chasten thy son while there is hope:* Use the rod wisely to them, before they become scourges and scorpions to you.

4. Labour to be in a good frame when you correct them, that love, and prudence, and meekness, and not rage and fury may govern the rod; and do not exercise too much severity towards them, that ye may not *provoke them to wrath*, lest the wrath of the children prove the grief of the parents.

5. Pray

5. Pray to God for a bleſſing upon your correcting them, that it may be effectual to drive out that *fooliſhneſs which is bound up in their hearts.*

Laſtly, Be good examples to your children; let them not ſee you in any ſin, for that may infect them, and make them deſpiſe you; but let them always ſee you ſhining in the Image of God, and that is the way to make them honour, and obey you in the Lord: live ſo, that ye may ſay to them, as *Paul* to the *Philippians*, Chap. 4. 9. *Thoſe things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in us, do, and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you.*

2dly, I proceed to direct thoſe parents who are under this calamity, how to bear it.

8 *Directions.*

8 *Directions.*

1. Abhor it as a great ſin to faint under this affliction; that is, either to be diſabled for thy duty, or to ſink in thy comforts; for it's a ſign that thou didſt place too much of thy happineſs in thy children, if their wickedneſs make thee faint under this calamity. I ſhall only plead with thee, as *Joab* did with *David*, when he made that bitter lamentation for his ſon *Abſolom*, 2 Sam. 19. 6. *Thou haſt declared this day, that thou regardeſt neither princes, nor ſervants*: So I ſay to thee, thou hereby declareſt that thou regardeſt not God and Chriſt, if thy ſoul faint under the burden of a diſobedient child.

2. Conſider what I have proved, that this is an affliction which ordinarily befalls Gods deareſt children: ye muſt not think of this, as if ye were the firſt godly parents of ungodly

godly children; or as if herein *some strange thing happened unto you.* I confess where a calamity seems singular or extraordinary, it is more apt to overwhelm the afflicted, because they will be then apt to think that there is some extraordinary displeasure in God against them; and to say with the Church, *Lam.* 4. 12. *Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger:* But this affliction is ordinary, and is consistent with the saving and distinguishing grace of God to them; and is *a rod that hath usually lain on the lot of the righteous.*

3. Consider that there might have befal'n thee greater miseries than this.

I shall instance in three greater Evils which would have made thee more miserable.

1. Thou

1. Thou mighteſt have been a wicked, an ungodly wretch thy ſelf; and for the great *Jehovah* to have curs'd and damn'd thee for ever, would have made thee unſpeakably more miſerable, than to be tormented a-while with a wicked child.

2. Thou mighteſt have had an ungodly yoke-fellow to be *as rottenneſs in thy bones: Solomon* ſeems to ſpeak of a troubleſome yoke-fellow, as more grievous than a wicked child, Prov. 19. 13. *A fooliſh ſon is the calamity of his father, and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping:* This is like the conſtant dropping of rain into a houſe, which rots the building, ſpoyls the goods, and ruins both houſe and inhabitants: and foraſmuch as thy yoke-fellow is nearer, and ought to be dearer to thee than thy child; to be afflicted therein, is a greater calamity.

3. God

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3. God

3. God might have left all your children to perish in their sins: but if ye have but one godly child, your joy in that should much abate your sorrow for your other wicked children.

4. Consider, thou hast greater things to affect thee with grief and sorrow than thy wicked children: there are whole Empires and Kingdoms of men, and women, and children who have as precious souls as thine, or thy childrens: these dishonour the same God, and perish under his wrath; and multitudes that have the Scriptures and Ordinances, despise the same Christ, and the same Gospel as thy children do: and why shouldst thou be more concern'd for one, or more of thy wicked children, than for *the whole world that lies in wickedness?*

5. Let your sorrow be guided by Scripture and Reason, that ye may not provoke God, and defile your souls,

ſouls, and wound your conſciences by ſinful groans and tears. For this end obſerve two Rules.

Firſt, Mourn more for their ſins whereby they provoke and diſhonour God, and defile and deſtroy themſelves, and others, than for any ſhame or loſs in worldly things that befall you hereby; that it may appear that the love of God, and your childrens ſouls, and not the love of the World, hath the greateſt influence on your ſorrow; for I fear that there is uſually in good parents too much of carnal ſorrow, and too little of godly ſorrow in their mourning under this great calamity.

Secondly, Let not thy ſorrow diſeaſe thy body, and impair thy health: God doth not require us to mourn more for our childrens ſins, than our own; and he never makes it our duty by ſorrow for either, to deſtroy

our bodies, which are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt: and the truth is, that godly ſorrow is the health of the ſoul, and never hurts the body; for Grace is always a friend, and never an enemy to nature; and therefore do not deprive thy ſelf of all opportunities to honour God, and ſerve his Church; do not make thy yoke-fellow deſolate, nor thy children Orphans by ſuch ſorrow, that will neither pleaſe God, nor eaſe thy ſelf, nor do any good to thy wicked and miſerable children.

6. Labour to get your Graces ſtrengthened under this great affliction; for ye have need of more knowledge, and wiſdom, and faith, and hope, and love, and meekneſs, and patience, to inable and fit you to bear this, than moſt other affections; and ye muſt ſee and enjoy more of God and Chriſt, to keep up your hearts under this, than under moſt other troubles; yet by the ſtrength

ſtrength of Chriſt ye may be inabled not only to bear, but to glory in this tribulation; and the greater the trouble is, the more good ye may gain by it.

7. Comfort thy ſelf, in that the greateſt and beſt things which thou haſt moſt pray'd for, and truſted unto, and expected, and chiefly loved and deſired, are all ſafe and ſure.

1. Thy God is, and will be bleſſed and glorious for ever, whatever becomes of thy child; all his infinite perfections are working for his glory: Chriſt himſelf is Gods, and doth the whole work of a Mediator as his ſervant, and for his glory; all the bleſſed Angels and Saints will for ever honour, and admire, and love, and praiſe him.

2. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are for ever thy own, and will to all eternity be glorified in making thee bleſſed and glorious:

thou haſt a bad child, but a good God; all thy work will be done, thy ſins pardoned and kill'd, thy graces perfected, and body and ſoul glorified: and ſhall an ungodly child make all thy conſolations herein ſmall to thee?

Laſtly, Conſider, this trouble will laſt but a little while. I confeſs I do not know, or can upon ſearch find any thing that can lift up the heart above this trouble, but the knowledge and ſenſe of the infinite love of God in Chriſt to a mans ſelf, and of that holy and glorious eternity which this love will ſhortly bring him unto; to tell you, that this is and hath been the caſe of other godly parents, may allay ſomething of your grief: But what is this, but to tell you, that others are, and have been as miſerable as you? or to tell you, that as wicked children as yours have been ſanctified and ſaved, yields ſome hopes; but it

it can amount to no more than to think they may be ſav'd, or they may be damn'd; and there is as much reaſon to fear the one, as to hope for the other: But for a man to ſee a gainful death, ready to looſe him into that world, where there is none of this ſorrow; and to know that at the day of judgment his wicked children will be no more to him than bloody *Bonners*, or *Gardiners*, or damn'd Devils, and that he himſelf ſhall ſit with Chriſt to judge them; and that he ſhall love and delight in the holineſs and juſtice of the Judg of all the World, in paſſing that ſentence upon them, *Depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*: This is ſufficient to overcome all immoderate grief for his ungodly children.

Laſtly, I ſhall finiſh this diſcourſe in a ſerious exhortation to theſe ungodly children, who are the grief

and bitterneſs of their good parents: And herein I ſhall,

1. Endeavour to convince them of their ſins.

2. Of their miſery.

3. Perſwade them to forſake their ſins, that ſo they may be freed from that miſery.

Firſt, I ſhall ſet before you the greatneſs of your ſins in theſe four particulars:

1. Ye have broken your Covenant with God.

2. Ye have broken the Bonds wherein ye were bound to the Church of God.

3. Ye have broken the Bonds of your duty to your parents.

4. Ye have broken the Bonds of your duty to your other relations.

Firſt, Ye

Firſt, Ye have broken your Covenant with God, whereinto ye were ſolemnly enter'd by baptiſm; for it's clear by that Scripture before mention'd, *Levit.* 19. 3. That by caſting off the authority of your parents, ye have diſowned the Lord to be your God. Your breach of Covenant with God appears more fully in theſe four particulars.

1. Ye do in your hearts and practices deny the Being of God; the firſt Article of the Covenant is, that ye ſhould acknowledge and believe that the Lord he is God; for *he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is*, Hebr. 11. 6. But this is the language of your hearts and lives, *That there is no God:* Ye deny God to be the firſt and beſt Being, in preferring the creatures before him; and ſaying in effect, That the creatures are all, and the great *Jehovah* is but as a cypher to you.

Ye deny his Omnipreſence; he fills all places where ye are, but ye take no notice of him; the preſence of a Father or Maſter hath ſome influence upon you; but it works not at all upon you, that there is a God in the room.

Ye deny his infinite Wiſdom, that Wiſdom of God in contriving the work of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt: I ſay that Wiſdom which is ſo glorious and wonderful to the principalities and powers of heaven, is to ſuch proud and ignorant boys and girls as you, but a fooliſh and ridiculous thing.

Ye deny his Power, in daring to war againſt him; and like thoſe hectoring Atheiſts, *Job* 15. 25, 26. *Ye ſtretch out your hands againſt God, and ſtrengthen your ſelves againſt the Almighty: ye run upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick boſſes of his buckler*, as if ye were able to fight God, and overcome the Almighty.

Ye

Ye deny his Holineſs, and think that God *is altogether ſuch a one as your ſelves*, Pſal. 50. 21. And that ye may not be terrified by your enmity and unlikeneſs to him, ye will pleaſe your ſelves in fancying that God is like you; as if ye muſt rather be a pattern to him, than he be a pattern to you; and ſo ye will perſwade your ſelves that he is the God of Atheiſts, and Whoremongers, and Drunkards, and Lyars, and Thieves, and not the holy God of a holy people.

Ye deny the Truth of God; one of the greateſt and beſt truths that ever God ſpake to man is that, 1 *John* 5. 11. *God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son:* and yet herein ye would *make him a liar*, in not believing this ſolemn record which he gave of Chriſt; a liar is one of the worſt characters of the devil: and this ye give to the true and holy God. Theſe things I write,

as

as it were, upon the brazen faces of all ungodly and disobedient children.

2. Ye break the Covenant, in refusing to take God for your God and happiness; the greatest promise that ever God made to man, is that Hebr. 8. 10. *I will be to you a God:* but this signifies nothing to you, ye will not accept of him for your chief honour, and treasure, and joy; it is no honour to you to have the great *Jehovah* for your Father; ye see no good in him, and account not your selves the better for him; and if ye lose him, ye think ye lose nothing; ye neither love, nor desire him, nor take any delight or pleasure in him.

3. Ye have broken the Covenant, in renouncing God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose Name ye were baptized: your lives declare that ye had rather have the love of a debauch'd companion, than the love of the Father of Jesus Christ; ye

ye deſpiſe the Lord Jeſus, and account the great price of redemption to be worth nothing; and would rather keep your ſins, than be ſaved from them: ye defie the wrath of God, and ſcorn that the Mediator ſhould make your peace with him: ye reſiſt the Holy Spirit, and would rather be made filthy, and wicked, and be taught to lye, and ſwear, and ſteal, than that the Spirit ſhould teach you to love, and ſerve, and delight in God.

4. Ye have broken the Covenant, in taking part with the devil, and the world, and ſin, againſt the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: and this ye have done two ways:

1. In believing the promiſes of the devil, the world, and ſin, and in not believing the promiſes of God; the devil, the world, and ſin, are the three great cheats of mankind, and they deceive men by making ſeemingly

ingly great and high promiſes: and by theſe they have prevail'd with man to break both the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace: the devil tempted our firſt parents not to believe that word of God which he gave them to deter and keep them from ſin, which word is written, *Gen.* 2. 17. *In the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely dye:* the devil tempted them to look on that word as a lye, and makes them that great promiſe, *Geneſ.* 3. 4, 5. wherein he promiſeth them, that if they eat the forbidden fruit, they ſhall not only be ſafe from all evil, ſaying, *Ye ſhall not ſurely dye*; but that they ſhall alſo be preferr'd to greater happineſs than God had then placed them in; for, ſaith he, *your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil:* and by believing this promiſe of the devil, they brake the Covenant of Life, and brought that deluge of ſin and

miſery

miſery which came upon all mankind; and ſince he prevail'd with men not to believe the word of God, which he ſpake to keep them from ſin and deſtruction; now his work is to tempt them to make God a lyar in the word which he hath ſpoken to ſave them from ſin and ruine by Jeſus Chriſt: and this is the word of the Covenant of Grace, which promiſeth eternal life and ſalvation to all that believe in Chriſt, and repent of their ſins, and live the lives of new creatures, according to the rules of the Goſpel: but the devil tempts men to break this Covenant by promiſing them life and all happineſs in a courſe of ſin; and theſe wicked children believe the devil herein, and bleſs themſelves in their ſins, ſaying with thoſe bold *ranters*, Deut. 29. 19. *We ſhall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our own hearts, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt:* and thus ye break your Covenant with God,

and

and make a Covenant with Death and Hell.

2. In obeying the devil, the world, and ſin, and in diſobeying God; ye call God your *Father in heaven*, but ye do the luſts of the Devil your father in hell; *ye walk according to the courſe of this world*, Epheſ. 2. 2. *and are the ſervants of ſin*, Rom. 6. 20. and ye hate, and fight againſt God your Maker and Redeemer; and were it poſſible for you, ye would every day kill him who only hath immortality: And thus like a company of *renegado's* ye live as if ye were baptized in the name of the devil, the world, and the fleſh, to renounce the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

Secondly, Ye have broken the Bonds of your duty to the Church of God; ye were born members of the Church, and ſubjects of the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt; and by baptiſm were ſolemnly admitted into that great,

great, and holy, and victorious, and bleſſed ſociety, *Hebr.* 12. 22, 23. *Mount Sion, the City of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, the general aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born written in heaven*; but ye have forſaken this Church, and turn'd your ſelves out of the family and houſe of the living God, and are become of the ſame party with the devil and his ſeed, and have laboured to fill the world with ſin, and the kingdom of Satan; and ye would have Jeſus Chriſt to have no Name, or Kingdom, or Miniſters, or Ordinances, or People in the world.

Thirdly, Ye have broken the Bonds of your duty to your parents: This appears in that thoſe black characters already given of wicked children are found on you; whereunto I ſhall add this one, which includes all the particulars of your diſobedience which can be mention'd, namely,

Ye

Ye do not love your parents; for love worketh no evil unto, but always willeth and ſeeketh the good of the beloved: Love ever inclines perſons to pleaſe them whom they love, and to love and delight in their company; and cauſeth ſuch looks, and words, and behaviour, as are expreſſions of love; how pleaſant hath it been ſometimes to me to ſee, as it were, the heart and ſoul of a child running out in his pleaſant and loving looks to his parents! but ye diſobedient children do not love your parents, but do them more hurt, and cauſe them more ſorrow than all the malicious enemies and perſecutors they ever met with in the world; ye are always vexing, and croſſing, and provoking them, and are as continual *pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their ſides*; and had rather be with lyars, and ſwearers, and drunkards, and with your wanton and idle companions, than with your wife, and grave

grave, and holy parents; how merry and jovial are ye in the company of ſuch who will joyn with you to ſerve the devil, and diſhonour God, and deſtroy your ſouls? but how uneaſie, and lumpiſh, and ſowre, and diſcontent are ye in the preſence of your parents? your ſpiteful looks, and ſullen words, and ſcornful carriage doth betray your hatred, and anger, and envy againſt your good parents: Ah wicked wretches! that ye cannot find in your hearts to love your parents, from whom ye had your Beings under God, and who have us'd all holy means to make you holy and bleſſed.

Laſtly, Ye have broken the Bonds of your duty to your other relations, and to all men; ye cannot be good brothers, or ſiſters, whil'ſt ye are ſuch bloody children to your parents; ye cannot be good ſervants or apprentices, or good husbands or wives, or good ſubjects to Magiſtrates, whilſt

ye are bad children; for the same sins that debauch you in that relation, will debauch you in all, and will make you an incumbrance to your place, the troublers of the world, and a very plague and curse to your generation.

2. I shall now endeavour to convince you of your misery; and oh that I had a heart and tongue to think and speak of this as the matter doth require! Consider, ye are cursed children, *Deut.* 27. 16. *Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother; and all the people shall say, Amen:* Observe, God himself doth here proclaim you cursed; he only can curse or bless you, having all curses and blessings at command; and can set his love, or pour out his wrath where he pleaseth; he is able and faithful to fulfil his own threatnings; and he knows you to be cursed, for he knows all the children of his Grace, and all the children of his

his Wrath. Obſerve further, that all Gods Miniſters are to pronounce you curſed, *verſ.* 14. *The Levites ſhall ſpeak and ſay to all the men of Iſrael with a loud voice, Curſed be he that ſetteth light by his father or his mother:* The Miniſters of God muſt with a loud voice, as if they would ring in the years of all, declare you to be curſed; and I, a Miniſter of the Goſpel, do hereby proclaim all wicked and diſobedient children, (though ſome of them may be the fruit of my own body) to be curſed. Nay further, all people, yea your own ſelves are to judge you curſed; *and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen:* They and you are to believe it, and to approve of it as moſt juſt and righteous, that ye be curſed. But that I may convince you of your miſery, I ſhall further ſet before you theſe four things:

1. Ye are out of the way of all good: God hath his way of mercy,

and his way of wrath; and ye are out of the way of his mercy, for ye do not ſtand in the grace and love of God, which cauſeth all good; and are children of his wrath, which cauſeth all miſery; and (as I have told you) ye have broken that Covenant which conveys all Grace and Mercy: ſo that no good can come to you, except ye turn to God and your parents.

2. Ye are in the very way and road to all wickedneſs: Many of the moſt horrid ſins in the world firſt began in diſobedience to parents; and moſt of thoſe who have proved Lyars, Drunkards, Whoremongers, Thieves, Murderers, were firſt ungodly and diſobedient children.

3. Ye are in continual danger of ſome remarkable judgment of God in this life, *Exod.* 21. 17. *He that curſeth* (or revileth) *his father, or his mother, ſhall ſurely be put to death.* Prov. 20. 20. *Who ſo curſeth his father,*

ther, or his mother, his lamp ſhall be put out in obſcure darkneſs. Your lamp of life and pleaſure may ſeem to burn and ſhine at preſent, but there is a black and diſmal night haſtening on all diſobedient children, Prov. 30. 17. *The eye that mocketh his father, and deſpiſeth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, and the young eagles ſhall eat it:* None are more like to paſs into the eternal world, through a ſhameful and untimely death, than diſobedient children; when God leaves children to diſobey their parents, it's a dreadful ſign of their approaching ruine: it's recorded of *Eli* his ſons, 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. *That they hearkned not unto the voice of their father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them.*

4. If ye go on in your courſe of diſobedience, ye will for ever be damn'd in Hell; for (I ſay) ye have broken that Covenant which promi-

ſeth eternal life to all that believe and obey the Goſpel, and doth as certainly bind over to the wrath and vengeance of God all that live in diſobedience to God and their parents. Miſerable children! I have ſent this poor little book to overtake you, before the wrath and vengeance of God do overtake you: I am not altogether a ſtranger to *the terrors of the Lord*, but do know what is before you, and what a meeting there will quickly be between God and you, better than ye do; and have laboured to affect my heart, in ſeeing what lies at your door; I know that whilſt ye are following the chaſe of your filthy pleaſures, evil from God is hunting you, and will find you out to deſtroy you; and I dare not damn my own ſoul by not warning you of thoſe ſins, which will be the damnation of yours: Fooliſh boys and girls can now laugh at the hearing of death, and hell, and judg-

judgment to come; and when Miniſters ſound the trumpet in their ears, to give them warning of theſe things, they can, like the War-horſe in *Job*, ſay among the trumpets, Aha; for the devil tempts his children to make ſport of thoſe things at which he trembles himſelf: but when I remember how I have ſeen in ſome of you your down-looks, your pale-faces, your ſhivering-limbs; and as *Job* ſpeaks of the Adulterer, when he comes to be known, *Job* 24. 17. that ye have been as *in the terrors of the ſhadow of death*, when your mortal parents have found you out in your ſins: I cannot but think how your countenances will fall, and your ſtout ſpirits ſink, and your mettal fail, when ye come to *fall into the hands of the living God.*

Laſtly, I come now to exhort and perſwade you to abhor and forſake your ſins, that ye may eſcape this

misery. I would have you to repent and believe with the Saints of God, that ye may be saved, before ye come to repent with the damned in hell; and with the devils, to *believe and tremble.* For this end I shall, 1. Endeavour to convince you of your Folly. 2. Direct you how to attain true Wisdom.

First, I shall endeavour to convince you of your Folly: ye see the Text calls a wicked son, a foolish son; God who knows you best, and hath a true judgment of you, calls you fools, and would have all the world to be of the same judgment with himself, and therefore to account you fools; and ye will at last call your selves fools, when ye come to have the portion of fools; and except ye judge your selves fools, ye cannot be wise. And that ye may, as in a glass, see your own folly, I shall propound to you these five Questions; and as God said to *Job*, so do I

in his name say to you, *Job* 38. 3. *Gird up your loins like men: I will demand of you, and answer ye me.*

1. Are ye not very fools in that ye do in your hearts and lives deny the being of God? There are no worse *fools than they that say in their hearts, There is no God,* Psal. 14. 1. For such a one saith in effect, that there is no Religion, no Sin, no Heaven nor Hell; yea, he saith, that he himself is nothing, and that there are neither Heavens, nor Earth, nor Seas, nor Men, nor Beasts, nor any other creatures; for if there be no God, there can be nothing else; so that ye have the name of fools written on your foreheads; and as it's said, *Eccles.* 10. 3. Ye say to every man that ye are a company of fools.

2. Are ye not fools to make such a foolish choice? It is the infinite goodness of God, that ye have life and death, blessing and cursing set before you; and that ye have a God

and

and Chriſt, and the Holy Spirit, and the heavenly glory to chuſe; and ye have Beings capable to chuſe them, and may take them for your own, and uſe them as your own every day, and that ye are called and commanded to chuſe them, and have time and opportunity to chuſe them, and ſhall certainly have them, if ye chuſe them: and yet theſe, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, *Prov.* 17. 16. are but *as a price in the hands of a fool that hath no heart to it.* Conſider, there are two ſorts of Affections in all humane creatures, and all are wiſe or fools, according as they ſet and place theſe; there are affections of union, as love, deſire, and delight, which do unite the heart to their objects; and there are affections of oppoſition, as hatred and anger, which do ſeparate the heart from their objects: And are ye not monſtrous fools, in that ye hate and abhor God and your Redeemer, in whom there are all reaſons for your

your love, and desires, and joy; and in that ye love, and desire, and delight in sin, and the devil, and death and hell, in whom there are all reasons for the hatred and revenge of your souls? To love those things which are altogether loathsome, and and to hate what is altogether lovely, is a plain argument of your madness and folly.

3. Are ye not fools in suffering every thing to deceive you? The Scripture tells you, that the devil is a deceiver; it tells you of the deceitfulness of your hearts; of the deceitfulness of sin; of the deceitfulness of riches; of the deceitfulness of wine and strong drink; of the deceitfulness of harlots, who promise pleasure, but prove *a deep ditch, and a narrow pit*; of the deceitfulness of a *lying tongue*, which promiseth that lyes shall serve the lyars turn, and do his work, but proveth to be but *for a moment*; of the de-

deceitfulneſs of theft and unjuſt gain, which ſeems ſweet at preſent, but ſoon after proves as *gravel in the mouth:* and yet notwithſtanding all the ſhame, and rags, and ſtings, and torments of conſcience, which have come upon you by truſting in theſe; yet ye will ſtill believe them, and ſuffer your ſelves by theſe deceivers to be cheated of God and Chriſt, and of your ſouls, and of your time, and of heaven.

4. Are ye not fools in being ſo ſet and bent to ruine and deſtroy your ſelves? *Prov.* 18. 7. *A fools mouth is his own deſtruction, and his lips are the ſnare of his ſoul.* Eccleſ. 10. 12. *The lips of a fool ſhall ſwallow up himſelf:* ye are ſo bent on your own ruine, that your hearts riſe in anger and hatred againſt your good Parents and Miniſters, and all that labour to ſave you; and ye account them your worſt enemies, who would not have you damn'd. Miſerable children!

children! allow your ſelves but one hours ſerious conſideration of your eternal eſtate, and ye will ſee reaſon to condemn your ſelves for a company of proud and ignorant fools, in attempting to run down God, and his Kingdom, and Religion, and in valuing your cups, and luſts, and lies at ſuch a rate, as for them to exchange the eternal life and happineſs of your ſouls.

5. Are ye not fools in not preparing for death and judgment, which are ready to overtake you? To convince you of this, be inform'd, That men are prepared for death and judgment, who by faith, and repentance, and holineſs, are become heirs of the promiſes of the Goſpel, and ſo have a right unto, and fitneſs for all that glory, which in performance of theſe promiſes, God will give them the poſſeſſion at thoſe great days; but men are unprepared when they are under the wrath and curſe of God,

and

and are condemned to those eternal torments which are threatned in the Scriptures, and will at death and judgment be executed upon them: Now prove your selves by these things, and ye may then see what fools ye are, in not preparing for these days; for if ye were prepared, ye should then enter into a world where all will love you; God, and and Christ, and all Angels, and all Saints will love you, and ye will for ever be holy and blessed in their love to you, and in your love to them; but being unprepared, ye must then be cast into a world where all will hate you, and where you will hate all the holy and blessed; God will there hate you, and be a consuming fire against you; the devils, and all the damned in hell will hate you, and you will hate them; and we find that our Saviour brands him for a fool, *Luke* 12. 20. who promiseth to himself an easie and merry life for many

many years, when that very night he was to loſe his ſoul: and he gives the character of fooliſh virgins, *Matth.* 25. 2. to thoſe who were unprepared for that great, and terrible, and ſudden cry, *The bridegroom is come, go ye out to meet him.* Poor children! let theſe common things be imprinted on your hearts; Death is certain, the day of death is as certainly appointed, as was the day of your birth; and as your birth kept its time, ſo will your death keep its time; ye cannot ſin away death, though ye ſin away the ſenſe of death. Conſider alſo, that death is near; whatever ye think of your lives, they will be but as a vapour, or ſhadow, or ſmoke, as God ſpeaks them to be; and though ye put death far from you, yet it will be within a hands-breadth of you; one day or hour may put an end to your ſpace of repentance, and conclude your day of grace and ſalvation, and diſpatch

ſpatch you into that world where no new creatures are made: ye now defie death, as if ye were a fit match for the king of terrors; ye ſcorn the grave, and ſcoff at the day of judgment, and deride everlaſting burnings; but when God ſhall *pour upon you your own wickedneſs*, Jer. 14. 16. then ye will too late condemn your ſelves for fools, when ye come to reap the fruit of your own folly.

Secondly, I come to give you directions to direct you to true Wiſdom, that ye may be ſuch *wiſe children, as to make glad fathers*, and not to be *the heavineſs of your mothers*.

1. Do not dare to put off your repentance any longer; it is not too late to repent, ſo long as God calls you to repentance, and gives you time for it: *Yet is the accepted time, yet is the day of ſalvation*: God, and Chriſt, and Angels, and the Church, and

and your bleeding parents are yet ready to receive you in love and joy: but it will shortly be too late to repent, though it can never be too soon. Dear children! ye must either perswade your selves that the word of God is a lie, and so think ye are secure from hell, because ye deny the Bible that threatneth it; or ye must presume that ye are not ungodly children, as indeed ye are; or else ye must conclude that your present state is not safe and good, and that therefore ye must either repent or be damn'd; and perhaps the devil himself doth not tempt you to resolve, that you will never repent, but to think that it is yet time enough, and that therefore ye will repent hereafter. I have sometimes dreaded to hear debauch'd children confidently say, That they do not question but they shall be converted, and become good; when at present they hate to be reformed; yea, I am

perſwaded that ſome ſecure themſelves in their ſins, by preſuming that the prayers of their good parents for their converſion and ſalvation will at laſt be heard: but how many ſuch have been, as *Solomon* ſpeaks of others, *Prov.* 14. 32. —*driven away in their wickedneſs*; in whom that dreadful Scripture hath been fulfill'd, Prov. 29. 1. *He that being often reproved, hardneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without remedy.* I ſhall here ſeriouſly reaſon this caſe a little with you; Why ſhould ye continue one moment longer in thoſe ſins which ye muſt repent of, or periſh; and defer repentance, for which ye ſhall have cauſe for ever to rejoyce and bleſs God when it is done? Are ye not wicked enough already, that ye muſt ſtay to be worſe? Have ye not defil'd your ſelves, and provok'd God, and refus'd Chriſt, and afflicted your parents long enough already? Poor ſouls!

ſouls! if there be one hour yet left wherein ye are ſure that ye ſhall not die, and fall into hell; or one hour wherein ſin is better than grace; and wherein it is better be a child of the devil, than a child of God; or if ye can come into the kingdom of God, and begin an eternal life an hour too ſoon, take that hour, and ſpend it on your luſts; but if not, ſtop preſently, and let this be the hour wherein ye begin to believe, and repent, and reform, and wherein ye begin to ſet your faces towards heaven, with an unmovable reſolution, to walk in the way of faith and obedience till ye come there.

Direct. 2. Judge whether ye have more reaſon to obey the devil, or to obey God, as the Apoſtles ſaid to their Perſecutors, *Acts* 4. 19. *Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken to you more than unto God, judge ye:* So ſay I to you, whether

it be right to obey the devil rather than God, judge ye. Consider, God hath authority to command you, for he is your Maker, your Preserver, and Redeemer, and ye owe your selves to him; but the devil neither made, nor kept, nor bought you, and therefore can have no right to command you. Consider further, that all the Commands of God, are the Commands of his Love; for he doth not only command you as your Lord, but also as your Father and Saviour; and therefore he commands you to take himself to be your God and happiness, to take his Son Jesus Christ to save you from all evil, and to make you for ever holy and blessed: but the devil commands you out of hatred and malice, and all his commands are the commands of a Murderer, and therefore he commands you to defile, and to destroy, and to damn your selves; he commands you to be blind and ignorant,

to

to hate and ſcorn God and Chriſt, and to love ſin, and death, and hell. Conſider alſo, that God is able to reward your obedience, and to puniſh your diſobedience; he is that *only law-giver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy*, James 4. 12. He can crown you with eternal glory, if ye obey him; and can caſt you into everlaſting flames, if ye diſobey him; but the devil, who is curſed and tormented himſelf, cannot make you happy, if ye obey him; nor miſerable, if ye do forſake and renounce him.

3. See the great difference betwixt thoſe wiſe and holy children, who live in obedience to God and their parents, and you who live in diſobedience to both; it is not wealth, or poverty, or beauty, or deformity, or ſickneſs, or health, but ſin and grace that make the greateſt difference betwixt perſons; and ye muſt know God and Chriſt, or elſe ye

cannot underſtand the worth of a Saint, nor the vileneſs of a Sinner: Some of you may look into your own families, and there ſee ſome of your brethren and ſiſters like pleaſant and fruitful plants about your fathers table, when ye are as briars, and thorns, and weeds in the family; they are the crown and joy, and you the calamity of your parents; all that ſee them, may look upon them as a ſeed whom the Lord hath bleſſed; but all that ſee you have reaſon to judge you to be a curſed generation. Poor children! is it better to be like *Cain*, than like *Abel*? or like curſed *Canaan*, than like *Shem*? or like *Iſhmael*, than like *Iſaac*? or like *Eſau*, than like *Jacob*? Are not your ſouls and bodies as precious as the ſouls and bodies of your good brethren and ſiſters? or can the devil, and ſin, and the world be better to you, than to them? or is not death and judgment as near you, as it is to them?

or

or have not ye as much reaſon to love and obey God and your parents, as they? or can ye endure the loſs of Heaven, or torments of Hell, better than they? if not, why ſhould not ye be as good as they are?

4. Do nothing but what ye are willing ſhould be known; if ye would not have your Parents, and Maſters, and the Magiſtrates, and your Friends and Foes know your lies, and luſts, and theft, and prophaning the Lords-day, and your haunting evil company, do not practiſe theſe things; ye need not fear who knows how holy, and juſt, and ſober, and chaſt ye are: Religion can boldly ſhew its ſhining face to God and man; but ſin makes you ſneak, and cowardly, and baſe, and fearful; and imprints marks of diſhonour and ſhame upon your looks and countenances, and fills you with horrour and conſternation, when ye are diſcovered. Conſider ſeriouſly, that all

from whom your greateſt ſhame and miſery will come, do know you; the devils know you, and will accuſe, and diſgrace, and torment you for the ſame ſins they tempted you unto; and they will not help you to hide your ſins when time of grace, and repentance, and pardon is paſt; your own hearts and conſciences know you, and will awake out of their preſent ſleep to condemn and ſting you; and God who is greater than all, knows you, and all your ſecret ſins are in the light of his countenance, and he will bring them all to judgment: and it will then fully appear to Angels, and Devils, and to Saints and Sinners, what ye are.

5. Therefore be not ſuch now, as ye dare not at the hour of death profeſs your ſelves to be: Religion and Godlineſs is at all times to be profeſs'd before God, and Angels, and Men, *Rom.* 10. 10. *For with the heart man believeth, and with the mouth*

mouth confeſſion is made to ſalvation. But what monſters would ye appear to your ſelves, if ye did profeſs your ſelves to be what ye are? Suppoſe ye were reading this but one hour before ye dye, and muſt ſay, We are now falling into the hands of the living God; and by that time that the glaſs is run out, and the clock ſtrikes next, we are to give account of our ſelves to the Judg of all the World: Dare ye then ſay, We profeſs our ſelves to be haters of God, and children of the devil, and deſpiſers of our holy parents, and that we chuſe the way to hell?

6. Conſider what account ye can give in being ſuch burdens of the earth, and in being ſo grievous and chargeable to all who are concerned with you: Is it nothing to you to be as biles or ſcabs in the body, or as ſmoke, or a ſtinking ſmell, or an infectious diſeaſe in the houſe and family where ye are, or as weeds in a gar-

garden, to cumber and annoy your place? Ye will pay dear one day for all the ſighs, and groans, and tears which ye have cauſed to your afflicted parents and friends; it will ſting you to think that ſo many have been loſers by you, and that your parents, and brethren, and ſiſters, have been ſo much waſted and impoveriſhed by your coſtly luſts; and that ye have given cauſe to all your wicked companions, to curſe the day that ever they knew you; and that ye have fill'd ſo many other parents beſides your own with grief and bitterneſs, by infecting, and defiling, and debauching their children: and methinks I hear all theſe ſaying to you, as *Joſhua* ſaid to *Achan*, Joſh. 7. 25. Ye *have troubled us*, but *the Lord ſhall trouble you.*

Laſtly, I ſhall ask you this one queſtion, What would ye have your parents to do with you? their love makes

makes them to be continually concern'd for you; but they know not what to do with you, for all the means which they have yet uſed for your good, hath but aggravated your guilt, and their grief; whilſt they kept you at home, ye did break all the good orders and rules of government in the family; at ſet-times for meat and family-worſhip, either your places were empty, or fill'd with ſin; ye diſquieted your parents, waſted the eſtate, defiled, or diſturbed your brethren and ſiſters, and troubled the houſe night and day: When they ſent you to School, ye plaid the truants, grieved and diſhonoured your Maſters, debauch'd your School-fellows, and were a reproach and ſcandal to the School: If they ſet you to be Apprentices, ye hated and wrong'd your Maſters, and were a plague to the family: If any of you were ſent to the Univerſity, ye were the rake-hells of the Colledge, and

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the Society was ſick of you, till it had expell'd and caſt you out; if after all other means were us'd, your parents ſent you to Sea, the Atheiſm and Wickedneſs of ſome of the Seamen, did you more hurt, than all the Wonders of God in the deep waters did you good; ſo that ye return'd, as if the Sea had made you like it ſelf, more raging and boiſterous than before; inſomuch, that your miſerable parents can do nothing but ſpend their days in mourning for your ſins, and in praying for your ſalvation, and in labouring to bear patiently your ruine, and to be content to live and die the fathers and mothers of fools.

And now, Children, I will take my leave of you, and ſhall leave you to the God with whom ye have to do, and with whom ye muſt have to do for ever; he is the God who will plead the cauſe of his own Name, and

and Honour, and of Religion, with you, and who will plead the cauſe of your diſtreſſed parents with you; a God whoſe wrath ye can neither eſcape, nor bear; there is a war betwixt this God and you; and if ye can make it appear that ye are greater, and wiſer, and ſtronger, and better than he, ye may go on: But my deſign in all this diſcourſe, is to perſwade you to believe, and repent, and obey the Goſpel, and ſo to make peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt; and for your encouragement, I do aſſure you, that the grace of God, and the Merits of Chriſt are as ſufficient to ſave you from all your horrid abominations, as if ye were as innocent, as when ye were newborn: God, and Chriſt, and Angels, and your Parents, and Friends, and all Saints are ready to rejoyce in your converſion and ſalvation, and your iniquities ſhall never be mentioned againſt you; but upon your un-

unfeigned turning to him, God will (as he is repreſented in the Parable of the Prodigal ſon) meet you in mercy, and fall on your necks and kiſs you, and entertain you with all the bleſſings of the Goſpel, ſaying, Theſe my children were dead, and are alive; they were loſt, and are found.

FINIS.